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CURSORY REVIEW

OF

"AMERICAN APOLOGY FOR AMERICAN ACCESSION TO NEGRO SLAVERY."

By JAMES GRAHAME, Esq.

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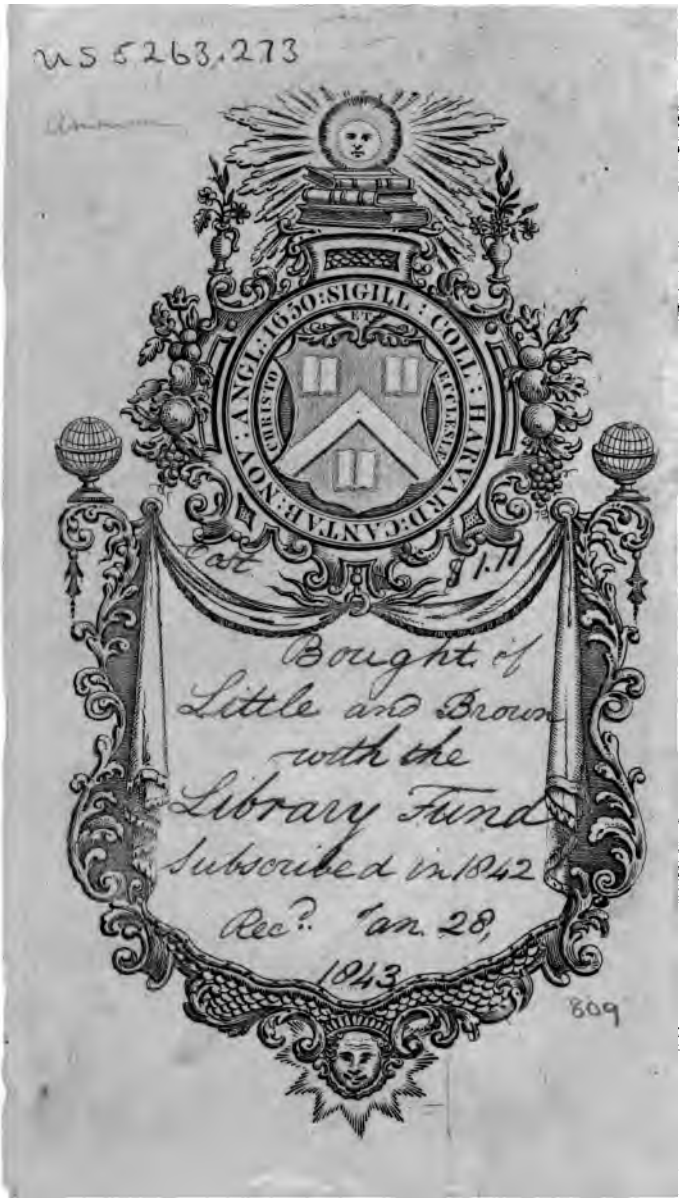
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WHO IS TO BLAME?

OR,

CURSORY REVIEW

OF

"AMERICAN APOLOGY FOR AMERICAN ACCESSION TO NEGRO SLAVERY."

BY

JAMES GRAHAME, ESQ.

LL.D. OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY, MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ACADEMIC SOCIETY OF NANTES, CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, HONORARY MEMBER OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF GEORGIA, AND AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF "THE UNITED STATES OF NORTH AMERICA."

" No crime so bold, but would be understood
A real, or at least a seeming good:
Who fears not to do ill, yet fears the name;
And, free from conscience, is a slave to fame."

SIR JOHN DENHAM.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.

1842.

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TO

THOMAS CLARKSON,

THE FRIEND AND BENEFACTOR OF THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE,

RESTORER OF THE VIOLATED RIGHTS OF AFRICA

AND THE TARNISHED HONOUR OF EUROPE,

WHO

HAS ACHIEVED THE GLORY NOT OF SLAYING THOUSANDS, BUT OF

FREEING AND BLESSING

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF HIS FELLOW MEN,

THESE SHEETS ARE DEDICATED,

AS

A SLIGHT EXPRESSION OF

THE HIGHEST VENERATION AND ESTEEM,

BY

THE SON OF HIS

OLDEST SURVIVING FRIEND AND COADJUTOR.

Nantes, June 1842.

CURSORY REVIEW.

"If there be," said that generous friend of America and of human nature, Thomas Day, (chiefly known as the author of *Sandford and Merton*,)—"if there be an object truly ridiculous in the universe, it is an American patriot signing resolutions in favour of liberty with the one hand, and with the other, brandishing a whip over his affrighted slaves." These words express the sentiment of all civilized men—except the Americans themselves—who, in reference to the system of negro slavery which they continue to uphold, so far from admitting the reproach of peculiar iniquity, boldly challenge a right to peculiar indulgence. In their Defence to the world, they allege discriminating circumstances from which they deduce in their own favour a plea of entire

moral exculpation—appealing to a dire necessity that makes them the blameless doers of devilish deeds.

In no age or country have tyrannical invaders and usurpers of other men's rights been without apologies and apologists. Tears have been shed to palliate the rapacity of Xerxes, and disguise the ambition of Cromwell. But time-born Truth has always unmasked the hypocrite and his hypocrisy, and disclosed the falsehood of the allegations on which the oppressor sought to rear his unsound and iniquitous plea. Perhaps the well known fable of *the wolf and lamb* would be rendered truer to nature,—at least to the new disclosures of nature that the new world has produced,—if the wolf were made to say to his victim, "I am sorry to destroy you; but can neither restrain nor condemn the appetite which I indulge. That appetite was awakened in me by the power and artifice of a stronger brute that once domineered over myself: and though I have exerted sufficient vigour to reject *his* tyranny over *me*, yet I feel quite unable to forego the evil appetite against yourself which he taught me, or to overcome the prejudice against you which his lessons impressed on my innocent, reluctant, but tenacious mind."

The Americans, with continual application of flattering unction to their own souls, and ostentatious challenge of the world's admiration, plume themselves on being, of all the nations who have flourished in ancient or in modern times, the people by whom civil and political liberty has been most justly and nobly appreciated, most gallantly achieved, and most faithfully and successfully cultivated, preserved, and extended. To the plain uncorrupted understandings of honest men in every other country, this American claim appears seriously impeached in truth and value by the actual subsistence of negro slavery in America; and the Americans are everywhere taxed with the disgrace of peculiar treachery to those generous principles of which they profess themselves the most ardent and praiseworthy votaries.

Manifold and various are the defensive pleas by which Americans attempt to repel, elude, or extenuate the heavy charge. The citizens of those States, members of the Federal Union, within whose territory negro slavery has been actually abolished, protest that *their* conduct is not only irreproachable, but deserves the praise of generous sacrifice of their private interests on the altar of universal justice and liberty:—a protestation of which I shall presently do

my endeavour to ascertain the value. They further protest against any responsibility for the actual retention of negro slavery within the Southern confederated States,—on the plea that by the constitutional compact of their National Union, the federal government is debarred from all interference with the social economy and domestic concerns of the particular provinces,—to whose local governments respectively is reserved the paramount and exclusive power of regulating such matters within the limits of their own separate and independent jurisdiction. They claim at once the praise of piety for disallowing within their private limits a practice repugnant to the will of God and the rights of man; and the praise of justice for their faithful adherence to a voluntary compact that blends their national name, character, and power with the support and perpetuation of that practice. On the other hand, the citizens of those States in which negro slavery still subsists, repel the charge against themselves in a tone as confident as that of their slaveless colleagues, but with greater variety of pleading. At once seeking their own vindication, and retorting the implied censure conveyed in the language of their national though not provincial colleagues, they contend that negro labour is essential to the pecu-

liar culture of the soil which they possess; and that negro slave-labour, after having been employed in *every one* of the older American States (even in those whose soils demanded preferably the labour of free and white men) has never been abandoned in *any one* where the whites could retain it without manifest disadvantage to themselves. Some of them protest that, deploring the existence of slavery as a hated outrage on human nature, they acquiesce in it as a rooted and irremovable evil, of which the blame (if there be any) mainly lies with the Almighty, in creating its necessity by creating such climes and other circumstances of such potent invitation as to render the temptation to the practice irresistible by any exertion of the virtuous force which he has imparted to man. I have heard many of these persons profess, with every appearance of vehement sincerity, their desire to discover some *practicable* plan of abolishing negro slavery; but have almost invariably found that they required the *impracticability* of redressing long and enormous injustice without any atoning sacrifice or reparatory expence,—of restoring and elevating, as if by magic, and without any surrender of interest or convenience, the rights and the dignity of a numerous race of men whom they and their fathers have ruined and

degraded. Others of them, and these by no means the least respected, enlightened, and zealous of their party, acquitting both their Creator and themselves from blame, courageously defend the system of negro slavery, and challenge not the indulgence but the applause of the world for their retention of it. They represent it as enhancing the sense and the value of liberty in the white masters, and fostering the dull and undeveloped intelligence of the black slaves; * as establishing between different classes of men patriarchal relationships, liable indeed to abuse, but of which the proper and reasonable use opens new fields of virtue and happiness to mankind; and as enlarging the physical as well as the moral welfare of the human race, by cheaply supplying

* I am far from classing the American writer Bancroft (though a systematic flatterer and soother of every reigning prejudice of his countrymen) with this tribe of reasoners. Yet we find him employing such language as this:—"To the Southern colonies Providence has entrusted the guardianship and the education of the coloured race. In the midst of the horrors of slavery and the slave trade, the masters have in part at least performed the office of advancing and civilizing the negro."—Bancroft's United States, chap. 24. This writer refers to the general prevalence of slavery in the world, as if there were safety (for America at least) in following a multitude to do evil, and to its prevalence in patriarchal times; as the Jews defended to our Saviour their practice of unrestricted divorce, by the concession which "the hardness of their hearts" (as He told them) extorted from the statutes of Moses.

those tropical luxuries and commodities which only negro labour is competent to produce. Negro slavery, they contend, is, of all existing human institutions, the one which, rightly used, has the strongest tendency to promote the glory of God and the dignity and felicity of men. They have certainly found a new field for the exercise and expatiation of the human faculties, by a brave bound over the ordinary limits of impudence, absurdity, and impiety.

But—to come to the topic which mainly engages my thoughts at present—there is one defensive plea, in which all classes of reasoners in America are united:—that negro slavery, whether regarded as a good, an evil, or a mixed institution, is a circumstance in the lot of the Americans not created by themselves or their American forefathers, but thrust upon them against their wills by the abused parental power of Great Britain during their national pupilage, and fostered to its present mature and vigorous growth among them by the same authority exerted in contempt of their earnest and oft-repeated complaints and deprecations. It is strange that no British statesman has ever thought it worth his while to ascertain how far the blame thus imputed to his country is well founded.

Before we inquire into the truth of the plea, let us attempt to ascertain its precise meaning.

The Americans do not pretend that Great Britain either employed or threatened to employ physical force in order to engage their fathers to appropriate negro slaves. No degree of ignorance and credulity within the calculation of mortal effrontery could credit such an allegation. What the Americans assert is, that Britain authorized and encouraged her merchants to *tempt* them with offered cargoes of negroes — a temptation whose first approach they would fain have forbidden; whose continued assault they dreaded and detested; but whose seductive influence proved invariably too strong for their virtuous forbearance. The plea, then, stripped of the vague rhetoric in which it is customarily clothed, imports not that Britain *forced* her colonial offspring to become slaveholders, but that she *facilitated* (as undeniably she did) their acquisition or at least their extension of this tyrannical power. Whatever effect this apologetic plea may produce in America, I believe that even the most credulous ear on which it can fall in European and impartial audience, is offended by the perception that it is pushed by its professors a great deal too far; and that it can no more justify the Americans than a straw can support

a drowning man, or the guilt of a thief can excuse the receiver of the stolen goods. "*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man,*"* is a text of holy writ which confronts with absolute denial that universal pretence of offending men that the temptation they underwent was peculiar and irresistible. And another sentence of the sacred volume confirms the same truth, in pronouncing that "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his *own* lust and enticed."†

The latest exhibition that has been made of this plea proceeded from certain Irish emigrants settled at Pottsville in the United States, and to whom their renowned countryman Daniel O'Connell had addressed a letter, beseeching the exertion of their influence towards the extinction of negro slavery in America. In answer to this letter, they have published a Memorial or Remonstrance disclaiming every other opinion respecting negro slavery save that which is current among native Americans; repelling as an outrage on their personal dignity O'Connell's assertion that white and black men are each others equals and brethren; and protesting that "negro slavery is a burden *entailed* on America by the tyranny and injustice of Great Britain." The

* 1 Cor. x. 13. † James i. 14.

language of these men *proves* nothing but the tenor of the information they have received in their adopted country, and their own consciousness of the danger of withstanding the stream of public sentiment there. With the too common fate of American colonists, they find that the deliverance they have attained in America from European maltreatment of themselves, is attended with the most powerful temptation to inflict or support in America the maltreatment of other men. Fugitives from oppression in the old world, they have become partakers with the oppressor in the new. So dangerous indeed is it to express in America, even within the States where slavery has been abolished, any sentiment unpalatable to the existing slaveholders, that Dr. Channing of Boston, long the most admired and popular writer in America, has been loaded with insult and menace by the planters of the Southern States for his very temperate essay on the lawfulness of negro slavery: and the venerable, accomplished, and excellent Dr. Quincy, President of Harvard University, in publishing the Memoirs of his noble-minded father,—the proto-martyr of American Independence,—has judged it prudent to suppress every passage in his father's journal remarking on the influence exercised by slavery on the social condition of the States where

in his time it chiefly prevailed. The authors of that splendid work, "The National Portrait Gallery of Distinguished Americans," even in noticing with praise the eloquence and energy with which Mr. Calhoun has resisted every attempt to engage the federal government to attempt the cure of negro slavery, have not ventured to specify the object to which his exertions were directed; but merely refer to it as a matter deeply interesting to the feelings and interests of the people of the United States.

It would be easy to multiply instances of the attempt to exculpate America by criminating Britain. I regret to find the pious, liberal, and generally well-informed George Ellis of Massachusetts thus express himself in the oration he pronounced to his fellow-citizens on the 17th of June 1841, in commemoration of the battle of Bunker's Hill:—"Let it ever be borne in mind that negro slavery, for the sin and inconsistency of which we were so severely satirized during our war of Independence—let it ever be borne in mind that negro slavery was introduced into these colonies and perpetuated here by the influence of the mother country, in defiance of the frequently and earnestly expressed wishes of the colonists."* In this attempt to soothe the con-

* Ellis's Oration, p. 10.

sciences of his countrymen with the persuasion that the negro slavery by which their republican commonwealth is polluted, infers on their part rather luckless blemish than moral guilt,—rather (sad choice!) the injury of rape, than the infamy of prostitution,—the courtesy of Mr. Ellis has softened his expression of sentiments which I presume he has derived from his preceptor George Bancroft, the eloquent and ingenious though rash and inaccurate historian of America—a man so proudly superior to the weakness of ancestral pride, that he takes pleasure in vilifying the land of his fathers, and not only gloatingly dwells on every reproach with which British honour has ever been assailed, but indulges so much exaggeration and invention in this labour of depraved love, that even American criticism has reprobated the virulence of his American prejudice.*

The most elaborate defensive pleading, both in this and in every other strain of advocacy in behalf of

* See North American Review for January, 1841. As a specimen of the accuracy of which Mr. Bancroft makes such glowing boast, take his notice of the Scottish Rebellion of 1745, on which occasion, says he, the vices of British character and society "left an opportunity to the Pretender to invade Great Britain, to conquer Scotland, and to *advance as far as Culloden.*" He is just as accurate in the statements by which he imputes negro slavery and every other American iniquity to British influence.

the Americans that I have ever met with, is the production of the anonymous author of a pamphlet published at London in 1835, and bearing the title of "A Letter to Lord Brougham on the subject of American Slavery, by an American,"—replete with compliment to the learned Lord, panegyric of America, and crimination of Great Britain. I know not if, in selecting Lord Brougham as the subject of his courtesy and the expected patron of his pleading, the writer was biassed by any reference to his Lordship's first literary production, the "Inquiry into the Colonial Policy of the Powers of Europe," in which the necessity of *negro labour* on the domains of the white proprietors of tropical soil is maintained, and the merits of *negro slavery* (by many persons confounded and deemed identical with negro labour) very daintily handled. But certainly the generous efforts by which for many years past Lord Brougham has signalized his uncompromising zeal for African freedom, seem to render him a very unsuitable patron of the client who has claimed his countenance. As the pamphlet, however, was put into my hands by an American gentleman most honourably distinguished in the walks of science and philanthropy, who bade me read *there* the defence of his country—and as I

have heard it characterized with similar confidence of eulogium by other Americans of no mean consideration, I have devoted some time to a careful perusal of its contents, and shall now devote some more to an honest exposition of the impression that its statements and arguments have produced on me. The strong interest long awakened in my mind by the grand experiment, so interesting to human nature, which is now under process of trial in America, has for many years attracted my attention to all the sources of American history: and I very much doubt if any living man knows more of the early history of America than myself. Other men, indeed, may question the extent and accuracy of my researches, or the impartiality of my survey. But, qualified as I am, or at least believe myself to be, I have no hesitation in declaring of the pamphlet to which I have alluded, that it is a production more disgraceful to American literature and character (in so far as it is to be esteemed the representative of either) than any other literary performance with which I am acquainted.

"It is my purpose, my Lord," says the American pleader, addressing Lord Brougham, "to endeavour to demonstrate that the people of the United States are neither now nor ever have been contented with

the existence of slavery among them."—"I ask, my Lord, *who* it was that introduced slavery into the then colonies of Great Britain, and imposed and riveted the chains of slavery upon them? [One might suppose the writer to be complaining that his countrymen were made slaves, rather than slave-owners.] *No one knows better than your Lordship does*, that it was the British Government. It was from first to last a measure of that Government in order to promote its commerce, and, *above all, its navigation interests.* It is a statement which needs no proof from me; for it is known to every one who knows *any thing* of the history of Great Britain and those colonies." What this writer means by *any thing*, I cannot pretend to say. But I have rarely found his countrymen well acquainted with the early history of their commonwealth; and if he himself be not a sheer fabulist and inventor, his own historical knowledge is somewhat *less than nothing*.—"And what was the course pursued by the colonists? *they opposed the introduction of negro slaves amongst them.* This was done so generally that it may with propriety be said that the opposition was universal. But still the horrid work went on. Some persons were found in the colonies who were willing to buy slaves; for cupidity is to be found in all

countries and in every age of the world. By degrees, slavery gained a lodgment in every colony, though the greatest accumulation of it was in *the Southern colonies which were less free in their forms of government and more under the control of the British crown than those of the North.* Other causes also co-operated to create that accumulation.

"To the evils of slavery as well as to those of any other sort, people may become gradually accustomed, and even to too great an extent reconciled. It was so in some measure with the colonies. Stern necessity shut them up to this alternative. But were they entirely contented? No: they petitioned the government of Great Britain again and again not to allow slavery to be perpetuated amongst them. Virginia did so; Massachusetts did so; Pennsylvania did so: others did so. And *all* would have done so, if they had not been discouraged by the unsuccessful attempts of their sister colonies. The power which turned a deaf ear to the cries of these infant colonies intreating that slavery might not be forced upon them at its commencement, still refused to hear when they besought that it might not be rendered perpetual."*

If the complimentary tribute of this writer to

* "Letter," &c. p. 5—7.

Lord Brougham be aught else than an instance of the vulgar artifice with which a fawning pleader attempts to seduce the ear of a judge—if Lord Brougham previously believed or has subsequently acquiesced in the statements thus coupled with an appeal to his name,—he is a most ignorant and credulous statesman, remiss to ascertain truth, little acquainted with the history of his country, and little careful of her honour. He needs no protestation from me that the very reverse of all this, is the character which he actually sustains.

The conduct of Great Britain during her long sanction of the Slave Trade is indefensible. Her government and domestic population were long deceived by that which forms the only apology that with any show of reason can be pleaded for the origin of the piratical traffic, or the first introduction of negro slavery into any country—the fallacious hope that was entertained, that enforced servitude would prove not merely a gentle and transient yoke, but a moral discipline through which the negroes might be conducted to the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion. Louis XIII. of France* and Elizabeth Queen of England severally refused to authorize the slave-trade, till

* See Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

they were induced to believe that they would promote the temporal and eternal welfare of the negroes by suffering them to be transported as labourers to the European settlements in America and the West Indies. The original admission of the Hebrews into Egypt was an act of benevolence: and it was only when they had waxed numerically strong, that they experienced the rigours of bondage. So blinded were the minds of men to the sin and danger of negro slavery, in the commencement of this practice, that when that most benevolent, intrepid, and uncompromising of Reformers, George Fox, the Quaker Patriarch, found at Barbadoes his fellow sectaries in possession of negro slaves, he merely urged them to treat the negroes with gentleness, to afford them education, and "*after certain years of servitude*," to make them free.* De Foe, though himself a pious man, and ascribing his own sentiments to his hero Robinson Crusoe, yet represents him as reconciled to the cruel sale of the boy Xury by the purchaser's promise to free him if he became a Christian. Britain trod the same evil and deceptive path that was trodden by every other state, European or American; and exceeded her competitors in slave-

* Fox's Journal.

stealing, for the same reason for which she excelled them in every other branch of what was then esteemed legitimate traffic. But censure of her conduct comes with a very bad grace from her colonial progeny, who greedily absorbed all the cargoes of negro flesh and blood that her merchants or the merchants of other countries ever tendered to their acceptance; and, as soon as they had formed a domestic commercial navy, became themselves active participants in the vile traffic—keenly pursuing the slave trade for many years both prior and posterior to their revolt from British dominion. The behaviour of Britain to her colonies was unwise and unjust; yet withal, far more liberal than the colonial policy of any other parent state in ancient or in modern times.

But let us look a little more narrowly into the facts of the case. The first cargo of negro slaves imported into North America, was conveyed by a Dutch vessel in 1620 to Virginia, where they were readily purchased by the planters, without the permission or even the knowledge of the British Government. Indeed this government did not then nor till several years after, exercise the political administration of Virginia, which was originally confided to a numerous society of English gentle-

men established at London. Moreover, the first of the British *Statutes of Navigation* was not enacted till the Restoration of Charles II. in 1660: and the slave-trade was not comprehended within the scope and operation of the commercial policy of the British Government till the reign of Queen Anne —*prior to which* negro slavery was established in every one of the American provinces that finally revolted from Britain,—of course with the exception of Georgia, which was not planted till the year 1733. The number of slaves in every province was regulated by its soil, climate, and other physical circumstances, and not by the degree of its subjection to British control. The Puritan colonists of New England, at a time when their provincial government was practically independent of Great Britain, reduced to slavery the captives whom they took in their wars with the Indians. Maryland and the Carolinas acquired negro slaves while they were subject not to the British crown but to *proprietary* dominion: and, undeterred by the threats and remonstrances of the British proprietaries to whom they owed allegiance, the Carolinian planters adopted and long persisted in the practice of kidnapping and enslaving the unoffending Indians who had the misfortune to be their

neighbours. Slavery was established in the territory of New York and New Jersey, before this territory ceased to be a province of Holland. The British government was far stronger in New York, after it became a British province, than in Virginia, Maryland, or the Carolinas: yet in each of these last mentioned States, the slave population far exceeded that of New York. The Quaker colonists of Pennsylvania became slave-holders while they depended not on the crown but on a Quaker proprietary, and before the British government had extended the grasp of its commercial policy to the slave trade: and the Quaker Assembly of this province and of the Swedish plantation of Delaware with which it was then united, flatly rejected the overture of their proprietary William Penn to alleviate by legal ordinance the bondage of their negro slaves?* Maryland and Pennsylvania were allowed to retain their proprietary constitutions as long as their colonial relation to Britain endured: yet, while the first swarmed with slaves, the other never possessed more than a very small number. In Virginia and Carolina, the government finally became completely

* "Though Pennsylvania boasts her peaceful plain,
Yet there in blood her petty tyrants reign."—GREGORY.

regal, and the slave population was always large. Precisely the same change of government took place in Massachusetts and New Hampshire; and yet there, the slave-population was always insignificant?* Connecticut and Rhode Island, escaping the fate of their New England sisters, were enabled to retain their pristine peculiarity of exemption from British control. Yet slaves, about as rare in Connecticut as in Massachusetts, were more numerous in Rhode Island than in any of the other States of New England; and the merchants of Rhode Island were long notorious for the avidity with which they pursued the slave-trade.

All the foregoing statements, as well as others which are to follow, I have already advanced and supported by proof in a historical work to which American criticism has allowed the character of scrupulous regard to truth, minute acquaintance with American history, and liberal appreciation of American merit.

Indeed, the man who, with the map of America and the tables of American population before him, will assert that the number of slaves in the several

* It is a remarkable fact that New Hampshire, though it possessed fewer slaves, retained slavery within her limits longer than any other State in New England.

American provinces depended on the various degrees of control exercised by the British crown over their domestic government, or on any other circumstance than on the varying degrees of temptation presented by the diversities of their soils, climates, and other local peculiarities,—wants either sense to see the truth, or honesty to tell it.

Of the thirteen provinces, then, that united in revolting from British supremacy, there were twelve in whose precincts negro slavery was established before the commercial policy of the British Government could operate on their population, or before this policy was extended to the slave-trade. The assertion is false that from any one of those provinces a petition or remonstrance was addressed to British authority against the first introduction of negro slaves or the perpetuation of negro slavery. In some of the Northern provinces, where, from the inaptitude of the soil and climate to the profitable employment of negro labour, the existence of negro slavery was soon felt to be an unrewarded inconvenience and disgrace, occasional languid and partial attempts were made (especially about the beginning of the revolutionary quarrel) to prevent *the farther import* of slaves—and these demonstrations no doubt were always discouraged and withstood by the

British Government: but not the slightest general demonstration was made by an American province of a wish or purpose to abolish slavery. Individual colonists may have protested against the injustice of slavery, as individual Englishmen likewise did with greater virtue (for they only heard of its evils without witnessing them), and as individual Americans do at present ineffectually to the American Congress. The Pennsylvanian Quakers protested among themselves (though very gently) against slavery even while a majority of their religious society retained slaves *—just as they protested against war at the very time when they suffered a militia bill to pass in the legislative assembly of which they possessed the command. There was nothing within the competence of the British crown to prevent any one of the provincial governments from abolishing slavery within its limits,—and so putting an end at once to slavery and the slave-trade. But not one of them was disposed to make any such sacrifice: nor would they have suffered Great Britain (had she been so minded) to have imposed it on them. I do not believe that even in those provinces where the

* See the Lives of those excellent American Quakers, Woolman and Chalkley, edited by my revered friend, the truly great and good William Allen of London; and the Life of Anthony Benezet, by Robert Vaux.

crown possessed a direct negative on the provincial statutes, any royal governor would have ventured to disaffirm a law proclaiming that the province was a land of freedom, and that its soil, like that of Great Britain, was incapable of being tainted by the existence of slavery. And in Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, the governors from whose final assent the laws derived their ratification, did not owe their offices to British appointment. What some of the northern provinces proposed, and what the British government withstood, was that they should continue slave-holding States, and yet suffer no more slaves to be imported into their territory or purchased by their people. Now, without slavery, there can be no slave-trade. The one is the demand; the other, the supply. But it was proposed in the Northern provinces of which we speak, at once to retain the demand, and to prohibit the supply; to sanction property in slaves, and yet debar their people, or rather a part of their people, from acquiring it. It was not till many years after American revolt from British dominion had been crowned with success, and the Americans had been bitterly taunted by all Europe for combining resistance of a certain degree of oppression of themselves with the infliction of far greater oppression on

others, that even those Northern States undertook to abolish negro slavery within their own limits. And when at last this measure was actually embraced by them, they conducted it (as we shall presently see) in a style the most tenderly regardful of the iniquitous interests of the white slave-owners, and disdainfully negligent of the just rights of the injured blacks, who have ever since experienced "the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely," even in the territory where empty statute declares them free, and practically continue slaves in every circumstance except the name.

It is likewise true that various applications were unsuccessfully addressed to the British government from some even of the Southern States, against the further importation of negro slaves. But in every case of the kind with which I have been able to acquaint myself, these applications were the selfish suggestions of men who themselves possessed abundance of slaves, and who were desirous of preventing others from rivalling them in wealth and provincial influence, and from endangering the public peace and *the stability of slavery* by additional importations of negroes unaccustomed to the yoke. They desired to retain and fortify their own aristocratic position by excluding new colonists from the

means of sharing it, and by making the increase of the white population contribute more effectually to the general safety against the disproportioned numbers of the blacks. When in consequence of the Revolution, the government of these States fell into the hands of the majority of the people instead of an aristocratical faction, not one of them renewed the proposal to limit or discontinue the slave trade; but all united in giving it a prolonged endurance of twenty years. Britain acted heinously ill in permitting slavery and protecting the slave-trade; but she acted neither inconsistently nor unjustly in refusing to permit one class of Americans at once to revel in the possession of negro slaves, and to exclude all the rest of the colonial population from the same means of enrichment and indulgence.

But, of a truth, the slave-trade itself, though patronized by the British crown, might at any time have been effectually resisted by any American colony whose provincial government was heartily supported in such purpose, not by a mere class, but by a decided majority of the inhabitants. In the year 1703, the provincial assembly of Massachusetts imposed a duty of 4*l.* on every negro imported into the province; and nine years after, passed an act prohibiting the importation of any more Indian

servants or negro slaves. Maryland, attached to slavery by evil interests which Massachusetts was exempt from, could and did abridge the British share of the slave-trade, in order to enlarge the share which her own merchants obtained in that traffic. By an early statute of her domestic legislature, a duty was imposed on negroes imported in vessels of which all the owners were not resident colonists.*

The only one of the thirteen American colonies united in revolt against British supremacy which was founded after the establishment of *the British Navigation System*, and the application of the principles of that system to the slave-trade, was Georgia. Let us see what the American pleader to Lord Brougham has to say with respect to the introduction of slavery into this province, whose peculiar circumstances, he is fully sensible, afford the surest test by which the justice of the American complaint can be tried. Instead of condensing his meaning, I shall transcribe his words, as the only fit vehicle for such meaning as he has shown a head to conceive and a tongue to express:—

"The case of the colony of Georgia," says he, "was if possible more remarkable and afflictive

* Holmes' American Annals, *ad annos* 1703, 1712, and 1715.

than that of any of the others. That colony was not founded in the darkness of the seventeenth century, but almost in the middle of the eighteenth. It was the last in the order of time of the whole thirteen British colonies which afterwards formed the United States. The worthy and beloved General Oglethorpe was its founder and first governor. *As usual, no sooner was the colony established or rather commenced, than slaves began to be forced upon it.* The governor and council besought the British Government not to allow slaves to be brought for market to that colony. This they did at a time when the parent country might easily have prevented the evil."—"All that Georgia could do was to petition and to remonstrate. This was done nine or ten times, *as can be proved by the records of that colony*, until the British Government, wearied by the importunities of the venerable Oglethorpe and his council, dismissed him from his office! *These, my Lord, are matters of fact; and if they are not known to the world, it is time that they should be.*"*

A more monstrous mass of impudent fiction than the American pleader here presents to the acceptance of Lord Brougham has never insulted the

* "Letter," &c. pp. 7, 8.

credulity of human nature since the days when Titus Oates published his Narrative of the Popish Plot under the auspices of Lord Shaftesbury. Of such men as this writer were probably composed those London juries in the reign of Henry VIII., of whom it was said by an eminent personage of the time, that they would find Abel guilty of the murder of Cain. The Americans are as little honoured by his patronage, as Lord Brougham is by his correspondence. What would be the statesman of whom this were the instructor! And what must be the cause of which this is the champion!

I appeal to all the annals of Georgia, and to every general History of the United States in which the particular fortunes of Georgia are recounted, for the truth of the following counter-statement of *facts*.—When the plantation of Georgia was commenced in the year 1733, the administration of political authority over its territory was committed by royal charter, not to any branch or department of the British Government, but to a Board of Trustees composed of those generous philanthropists by whom the colonial project had been devised and digested. It was by this board that General Oglethorpe, one of its own members, was appointed to preside over the colony: and it was during the

subsistence of its authority, that Oglethorpe was finally recalled to England in 1743,—ten years after the foundation of the settlement, nine years before a single negro slave did or could enter its territory, and for reasons that had no connection whatever either with negro slavery or with any affair or concernment of the colony.* One of the earliest acts of the Board of Trustees, after the first band of emigrants had been transported to the colony, was to frame and publish a code of fundamental laws and constitutions for the infant society, by which *negro slavery was absolutely prohibited in Georgia.* No sooner was this ordinance promulgated, than it excited the most violent and general discontent among the colonists, who were chiefly composed of a class of unfortunate men very ill adapted to a scene of rough labour and patient poverty, and whose complaints of the privation of negro aid in their toils were provoked by the example and abetted by the counsel of their neighbours the planters of South Carolina. Accepting the invitation of these counsellers to share with them the envied privilege of possessing negro slaves, so many of the Georgian colonists aban-

* See in particular, the Life of General Oglethorpe, in the "Collections of the Georgia Historical Society," vol. i.

doned their colonial soil, that fears began to be entertained of the total desertion of the young province; and in the year 1737, a general meeting of the remanent planters, in a petition and remonstrance to the Board of Trustees, protested vehemently that this catastrophe was inevitable unless the prohibition of negro slavery were repealed. From this claim of the Georgian colonists to be indulged with the possession of slaves, the only dissenters were a handful of Scottish Highlanders who had recently resorted to the province, and some German members of the Moravian brotherhood, who, in spite of the protection of the Trustees, were soon after expelled from the province by the jealousy and persecution of their fellow-planters. The Trustees refused to hearken to the desire of the petitioners, or to suffer a single slave to enter Georgia; and firmly persisted in this refusal till the year 1752, when, disgusted with the languishing condition and incurable murmurs and discontent of their people, they gladly surrendered their chartered authority to the Crown. Then, and not till then, did the Crown, in accordance with the earnest and general importunities of the colonists, bestow on them a constitution precisely similar to that of South Carolina, and including, among other

more worthy but not more coveted boons, the privilege of acquiring and employing negro slaves. But, as the British Government, though it might permit, could not force its colonial subjects to buy negroes, so, though it might encourage, it could not force its merchants to sell them: and little effect was produced in Georgia by her altered constitution till after the Peace of Paris in 1763, when beginning to flourish under the improved husbandry which she owed to the example and direction of the British Governor Sir James Wright, her planters acquired sufficient wealth and credit to invite the resort of slave merchants and stock their territory with a numerous servile population. This was but two years before the commencement of the revolutionary quarrel between Britain and her American colonies. Of petitions presented in the brief interim or at any other period by the Georgians to the British Government for the withdrawment or restriction of the boon they had so long and earnestly solicited, I believe that no traces are extant, except in the imagination of the writer who has hazarded so incredible an assertion. In none of the other American States has negro slavery proved so bitter a bondage as in Georgia, which owed its colonization to the most humane and benevolent of mankind, and whose

primitive colonists were men delivered from the bonds of merciless creditors, or flying from the rigour of ecclesiastical persecution.

With curious infelicity, the American writer on whose work I have been remarking, appeals to the transactions of the American Congress at the period of the assumption of National Independence, in proof of the reluctance with which his countrymen had endured the introduction of negro slavery into their territory, and the honest grief and indignation with which its continued existence inspired them. Those transactions, he maintains, warrant the conclusion that one of the reasons that moved the Americans to revolt against Britain was their resentment of her wicked policy in planting negro slavery among them and preventing them from abolishing the slave-trade. It is to their words, not their deeds, that he refers,—and (with enterprising reach of grasp) not merely to the language which they actually employed, but to that which, after deliberate consideration of its politic propriety, they finally declined to employ. Let us see what was this language, whether actually employed or ineffectually suggested.

The proclamation by which the American Congress, in 1775, sought to justify its military prepara-

tions against Great Britain, commences in the following terms:—"If it were possible for men who exercise their reason to believe that the Divine Author of our existence intended one part of the human race to hold an absolute property in and an unbounded power over others, marked out by His infinite goodness and wisdom as the objects of a legal domination never rightly resistible however severe and oppressive,—the inhabitants of these colonies might at least require from the parliament of Great Britain some evidence that this dreadful authority over them has been granted to that body. But, *a reverence for our Great Creator*, principles of humanity, and the dictates of common sense must convince all those who reflect upon the subject, that government was instituted to promote the welfare of mankind, and ought to be administered for the attainment of that end." The Declaration of Independence which was embraced and published by the Congress in the following year, after an exordium professing that "*a decent respect to the opinion of mankind*" required the Americans to promulgate their reasons for revolting from British domination, thus proceeds:—"*We hold these truths to be self-evident;*—that *all men are created equal*, and endowed by their Creator with certain unalien-

able rights; that among these are, life, *liberty*, and the pursuit of happiness." It was impossible for a man like Jefferson, who is known to have been the author of this famous Manifesto, and who, though himself a slaveholder in a State which even now retains negro slavery, did all his life, or at least during the greater part of it, express regretful disapprobation of that unjust and tyrannical system—it was impossible for him not to perceive that his countrymen (especially when avowing "a decent respect to the opinion of mankind") solicited with very bad grace the sympathy and assistance of the world by an appeal to principles which in their own daily treatment of their fellow men they violated to an extent far transcending any outrage they could impute to Great Britain. Accordingly, with policy more intrepid than honourable, he proposed to defeat by anticipating the reproaches of mankind, and to diminish the dangerous scandal by shifting the main part of its moral opprobrium from the brow of his countrymen to the head of the British monarch. Perhaps Franklin, who was associated with him in the composition of the Manifesto (which, however, is acknowledged to have flowed exclusively from Jefferson's pen) was equally sensible of the expediency of an artificial *conductor* that might divert

the flash of the world's indignation. In prosecution of this ambidextrous device, the following passage was introduced into the first draft of the Declaration of Independence that was submitted to the general review of the Congress :—" He [the British King] has urged cruel war against human nature itself, *violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty* in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur a miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian King of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where men should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or restrain this execrable commerce. And that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms amongst us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them by murdering *the people on whom he also obtruded them.*"

But the colleagues of Jefferson, less passionate, less cunning, perhaps less intrepid, and certainly more considerate in their self regard than he, rejected

this suggestion of ingenious but short-sighted policy; and the passage we have just perused was *expunged* from the Declaration of Independence. Not one of the thirteen States represented by the Congress was then prepared to abolish slavery within its limits, or even to debar its people from pursuing the slave-trade; and five of them, including Virginia the oldest and Georgia the youngest of the States, cherished the fixed purpose (from which they have never yet departed) of retaining their negro population in perpetual or at least indefinite bondage. Every American acquainted with the history of his country must have been sensible of the injustice and absurdity of making Britain the scapegoat of American iniquity; and every man of mature age must have remembered the first introduction of slavery into Georgia, and the clamorous solicitations by which the Georgians extorted this boon from the British Government. Political parties have commonly shown themselves far more eager to maintain that God was on their side, than earnest to ascertain that they were on His: and all the American States, while invoking the blessing of God and the sympathy of mankind for their own violent revolt against oppression, were prepared to pour the vials of wrathful vengeance and malediction on the de-

voted heads of every one of their negro brethren who should imitate their example and attempt to be free. In such circumstances, the Congress could not embrace the Machiavellian counsel of Jefferson, without stultifying their Declaration of Independence. Stigmatizing the system that formed their own daily practice, without even affecting a purpose or desire to renounce it, — the only effect of their frontless and precarious imputation of its origin to the British Government would have been to proclaim to the world that Britain could force the Americans to be oppressors, though she could not force them to be slaves; that they were capable of resisting *her* injustice, but not of discontinuing their own; and that they "*reverenced their Great Creator*" too far to believe other men entitled to be *their* tyrants, but not far enough to distrust their own title to be tyrants of other men.

Jefferson himself (a man endowed with many useful and admirable qualities, wedded in heart and soul to democracy, intensely earnest in the prosecution of immediate purpose, but rarely candid, and not always sincere*) was far too well acquainted

* His published correspondence shows that he privately ridiculed and depreciated Lafayette even while professing in public the most unbounded admiration of him; and one of the most distinguished

with American history to have regarded the plea which he unsuccessfully recommended to the Congress in any other light than that of a controversial artifice sanctioned by the all-sanctioning necessity of guarding public safety in a season of imminent peril —a consideration to which politicians have always ascribed that legal or super-legal supremacy which over-rides the authority and qualifies the obligation of all other rules and principles of human duty. When the mighty cloud of passion and prejudice engendered by the revolutionary contest was dissipated, he practically avowed the hollowness of the rejected plea, by forbearing to repeat it in the ablest and most interesting of his literary productions, his "Notes on Virginia," first published in 1787. There, with every inclination to extol the virtues and extenuate the failings of his countrymen, he confesses his inability to suggest any other apologies for the subsistence of negro slavery amongst them, than the natural inferiority, which he asserts, of the negro race—(an assertion which the late Abbé Gregoire assured me that Jefferson in a private letter to him did subsequently retract)—and

men in America, an intimate friend of Jefferson, informed me that when he taxed him one day with insincerity in professing Unitarianism, Jefferson answered with a smile, "I regard Unitarianism as the Euthanasia of Christianity."

the fatal effect of those wrongs which the white men, in the natural exorbitance of unrighteous and unlimited power, had inflicted on their sable brethren. "Deep-rooted prejudices," says he, "entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections, by the blacks, of the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one or the other race." So far from pretending to shift the opprobrium of negro slavery from America, or to demur to her liability to divine vengeance for bereaving any race of men of those liberties which are the gift of God, he says expressly—"I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just"—and adds that in the too probable event of a general insurrection of the negro slaves against their white masters, "the Almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest."* Thus, according to Jefferson's conviction, the justice of God is on the side of negro revolt in America; and not one of the divine attributes is in favour of the white

* Jefferson's "Notes on Virginia." So also thought Dr. Johnson when he gave for his toast at dinner, "Here's to the next insurrection of the negro slaves against their oppressors."

men's tyrannical dominion, or of their efforts to resist its overthrow.

Widely different is the opinion entertained by the American correspondent of Lord Brougham. "Much as we may desire the abolition of slavery in the United States," says he, "and no one can desire it more sincerely than I do, yet it will not do for a moment to think of effecting it *through violence.* No, my Lord, that must be opposed at the very threshold: and I am sure it will be by every good man in the United States. That course is too horrible to be spoken of; and the man deserves everlasting infamy who dares to suggest it."* According to this writer, then, every good man in the United States is opposed to what the great champion and founder of American democracy regarded as the course of God's justice; and Jefferson (whose unsuccessful suggestion to Congress he warmly extols and characterizes as the universal and honourable sentiment of America) is a man deserving everlasting infamy. The sentence thus fulminated must extend also to Dr. Channing, who, in his late treatise, entitled "The Duty of the Free States," has expressly proclaimed that a slave risking his life and slaying his master for the attainment

* "Letter," &c. pp. 21, 22.

of his own liberty, is not only guiltless of murder, but an object of just admiration. This dealer in eternal vengeance ought to tell us the duration of the punishment merited by his own countrymen, for seeking "through violence" their deliverance from a British yoke incomparably more righteous and merciful than the yoke to which they subject their own negro slaves.

Very unwisely, I think, has the American pleader contrasted the conduct of Britain and America since the dissolution of their colonial relations, with regard to slavery and the slave trade; and most unsuccessfully has he laboured to clothe the contrast in colours favourable to the proud pretensions of his countrymen. Let us briefly consider what the conduct of the two nations actually has been.

When, by the long and glorious exertions of that band of philanthropists whose ostensible parliamentary leader was William Wilberforce, but whose real Chief and earliest and most abundant labourer was Thomas Clarkson, the eyes of the people of Great Britain were fully opened to the cruelty and wickedness committed at the distance of many thousand miles from their shore; and when the falsehood and sophistry by which a powerful host of slave merchants and slave-owners veiled the iniquity of

their proceedings, had been fully exposed,—the British people, in 1807, compelled their oligarchal government at once and instantly to abolish the slave-trade: and as soon as they obtained a reformed parliament, they, by its agency, abolished slavery itself within all the quarters and dependencies of the British empire, and taxed themselves to the amount of twenty millions sterling as an indemnity to the slave-owners for the real or supposed pecuniary loss incurred by the privation of their unrighteous power, and a just penalty on themselves for having suffered that power to exist. By this last act, Britain has afforded America the generous example of self-sacrifice in the cause of justice and humanity,* and taught her the valuable economical lesson that *negro labour*, however appropriate to particular climes and soils, is not inseparable from *negro slavery*. So much for the one country:—Now for the other. The American Convention by which the Constitution of the United States was framed in 1788 (composed, as the American pleader very justly represents, of enlightened and benevolent men fully awake to the cruelty and wickedness that was transacted on their

* "We, after our ability, have redeemed our brethren: and will ye even sell your brethren?"—Nehemiah v. 8.

own shore and under their eyes) declared the slave-trade an outrage on human nature that *must* cease to exist; *but*, by way of indemnity to the American slave-traders for the loss of their occupation and to the slave-owners for the cessation of their supplies, authorized the prosecution of the traffic for twenty years longer—thus rendering a cheap tribute to the principles of justice and humanity, securing to the whole existing generation of the Americans the enjoyment of the slave-trade, and sanctioning an enormous addition to the difficulty of ever afterwards abolishing slavery. It was reckoned that America possessed nearly enough of negro slaves, and that twenty years more of slave trading would collect a stock sufficient for the safety and convenience of the country. Since then, the only transactions of the Federal Government that have had any relation to slavery are those by which it voluntarily adopted into federal membership and deliberately incorporated with *the United States*, vast additional provinces swarming with the slave population that had grown up there under the colonial dominion of France and Spain; and its obstinate rejection (on the plea of national dignity) of the proposal of the British Government to *secure* the extirpation of the still existing though contraband slave-trade, by conceding a *right of*

search of suspected vessels of either nation. And although *foreign* slave-trade is declared illegal by American jurisprudence, an internal traffic in negroes is permitted and practised in most of the American States. Striking indeed has been the contrast between the proceedings of the two countries in this important matter. Nor has the old parent country any reason to apprehend therein an eclipse of her glory from the superior lustre of her emancipated progeny. The Federal State of Columbia, the offspring of American Independence, is stained by the admission of slavery: and the Republican metropolis, the seat of Congress, and on which the illustrious name of Washington has been bestowed, is the focus of the domestic slave-trade of America.

The American pleader affects to regret that the Convention of 1788 took no step to secure either the immediate or even the gradual abolition of slavery throughout the whole American territory. But the members of that Convention would have acted with the most ludicrous and glaring inconsistency in pretending to undertake the performance of a task of which they had so effectually increased the difficulty. They made no such hypocritical demonstration: but, having rendered the extirpation of sla-

very from the American soil impracticable for twenty years, and less practicable at the end of that period than it was before, they remitted to each separate State the exclusive power of dealing with the system of slavery within the limits of its own peculiar jurisdiction. What has been the consequence? In the Northern States, where the inhabitants were never exposed to the temptations by which slavery was invited and extended in the South,—where the slaves were few, the white population numerous and rapidly increasing, and white labour at once easily procurable and fittest for the soil—there, where slavery reflected the greatest disgrace on the national name, afforded the least profit to the slave-owners, and injured the community by discrediting the occupation of free labourers,—a *gradual* abolition of slavery was brought to pass by laws which indulged the slave-owners with the choice of selling their negroes to the Southern planters, or of retaining their service for a limited period deemed sufficient for their own protection from pecuniary loss. In the Southern States, widely differenced from their northern sisters in all the circumstances which I have particularized, the number of slaves was progressively augmented by copious importations, and their bondage aggravated by laws restrict-

ing manumission, prohibiting negro education, and subjecting even freed men of colour to such privations and indignities as must repress the desire as well as the hope of freedom in the bosoms of the negro slaves. This last feature of Southern policy has been responsively copied in the manners and even in the laws of those Northern States within which slavery has ceased to exist,—where free persons of colour are sternly excluded from all social equality with the whites, from all political franchises and most civil rights,—and where in the year 1828, it was decided by the legal tribunals of Connecticut that "free people of colour are *not* citizens of the United States." Harsh as this may appear, it is milder than the sentiments which are openly avowed in the South, where the *right* of free people of colour even to breathe nature's air in America is disputed. "What right," says Mr. Custiss, an American orator and slave-holder, "what right, *I demand*, have the children of Africa to a homestead in the white man's country?" *I answer*—the same God-given right that white men have to dwell there, and a far truer right than Mr. Custiss himself possesses to turn any part of God's earth into a scene of bondage of his unoffending fellow men. A late address published by the *Colonization Society* of

Connecticut (a State, be it remarked, which has long plumed itself on the abolition of negro slavery within its limits) contains the following protestation :— "The habits, the feelings, all the prejudices of society—prejudices which neither refinement, nor argument, nor education, *nor even religion itself* can subdue—mark the people of colour, whether bond or free, as the subjects of a degradation *inevitable and incurable.*" And in another recent American publication, the author frankly avows that "I am clear that whether we consider it with reference to the welfare of the State or the happiness of the blacks, *it were better to have left them in chains than to have liberated them to receive such freedom as they enjoy:* and greater freedom we *cannot, must not* allow them."* Even in Pennsylvania, so renowned for the equity of her laws and the liberality of her citizens, the French writer De Tocqueville informs us that no free man of colour dare present himself to vote at an election. Nominally enfranchised by the laws of the State, they are actually disfranchised by the more powerful manners of the people. Surely the American who vaunts to strangers what his

* These and many other passages of similar import in the works of American writers, are cited in Jay's "Inquiry into the Character and Tendency of the American Colonization and American Anti-Slavery Societies."

countrymen have done to ameliorate the lot of the coloured members of the family of man, confounds the specious show of a whited sepulchre with the substantial honour of wisdom and virtue. Such has been the result of that measure of the American Convention, and of those measures of the Northern States where slavery has been nominally abolished, that La Fayette, after his last visit to America, protested with grief and surprise that the achievement of American Independence had brought only increased misery and oppression on the African race. In the modest mansion of La Fayette at Paris, I have seen that great and good man greet the approach of a negro visitor from Haiti with a kindness and courtesy which the meanest white man in America would disdain to extend to any sable member of his species. Africa indeed has had reason to curse the Independence of North America.

No man is so blind as he that will not see. With such damning facts staring him in the face, the American writer who addresses himself to Lord Brougham persists in asserting that the generality of his countrymen treat free persons of colour with liberality, and slaves with kindness; that they deplore the subsistence of negro slavery among them;

and that, entertaining a fixed purpose of purging their pure soil from such poisonous product, they are steadily and successfully pursuing the wisest means of accomplishing this desirable consummation. Such assertions from such a writer can have no weight with any impartial mind. So far from believing the representation he gives of the sentiments of the generality of his countrymen, I disbelieve even the prevalence of such sentiments with himself. His humanity seems to be of that unsolid, vague, and vapoury cast on which the Roman slave-masters prided themselves when at the theatre they warmly applauded the celebrated words of Terence (himself an enfranchised slave) *Homo sum, humani nil a me alienum puto.* Little reliance can be placed on a man's fixed purpose to forsake the vice or extirpate the crime for which he eagerly seeks and promptly finds excuses—and still less when he shows, like this writer, more appetite to swallow excuse than honesty or discrimination to ascertain its legitimacy. Loving the praise of men rather than the praise of God, he is far less sensitive to the evil of American slavery than to the human reproach which it provokes; and, lavishing the tenderest indulgence on slave-holders and all their inhuman tyranny and prejudice, he heaps abuse on

the Irish statesman O'Connell for the passionate strain in which he has characterized negro bondage, denounced its abettors, and urged its abolition. With taunting purpose (in which the supposed sympathy of Lord Brougham is more artfully studied than wisely addressed) he says, "I understand that Mr. O'Connell is only *an eleventh hour man* in the anti-slavery cause; and I suppose that he feels that it is incumbent on him to establish his sincerity and zeal by an uncommon amount of violence."* Every man who has read his Bible must recollect the Divine estimate of him whose envy depreciated *the labourers of the eleventh hour*. With peculiar propriety is the reproach again employed by the champion of falsehood, injustice, and hypocrisy: and with perfect propriety might O'Connell reply to him, "Is thine eye evil because I am good?"

That free people of colour are *not* treated with liberality but are subjected to the vilest indignities in the United States, is manifest not only from the American avowals which I have already cited, but from the concurring reports of *every traveller of every nation* that has recently visited America, and communicated his observations in discourse or by the press. With close (though perhaps uncon-

* "Letter," &c. p. 41.

scious) copy of the policy of ancient Egypt towards the children of Israel, America denies to free men of colour every liberal motive and every generous style, solace, and recompense of industry; and then insults them with the calumnious reproach "Ye are idle, ye are idle." The Americans themselves admit that (from the evil tempers of individual white masters) many of their slaves are treated with a cruelty far exceeding the necessary rigour of bondage: and I, on the other hand, admit that very many of their slaves, *as long* as they show themselves so brutalized by slavery as to be content with their degradation, and willing to display the mirth and sing the songs that were required of the enslaved Jews by their Babylonian captors, are treated with a kind, patient forbearance unexampled in the intercourse of masters with hired servants. But this says little for the virtue of the masters, and still less for the happiness of the slaves. Cotters have been known to stint their own and their children's meals in order to fatten their pigs: and the contented and gently-used negro slave would have as much reason as the cotter's pig to be satisfied with his treatment, if he possessed only a brutal capacity of enjoyment.

"If thou mayest be free, use it rather," says an inspired apostle to enslaved men. He to whom the sentiment thus divinely sanctioned is unknown, has lost a powerful spring of manly purpose and active virtue, an important feature of the image of God in man. His right hand has lost its cunning, who prefers the flesh-pots of the oppressor to the dignity of freedom. "Happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us," is the natural sentiment of enslaved men. The slave who can contentedly behold himself and all that are dear to him, all their possessions and all their mutual ties, the performance of all their mutual duties, and the indulgence of all their mutual affections, dependent on the fluctuating interest or caprice of a fellow creature arrogating right to sunder what God has united,—the slave who can behold and endure all this without directing his wishes and purposes to a condition better and more elevated, has parted with every trace of moral manhood, and lost in worth what he has gained in tranquillity. But all testimony unites in proving that as soon as a negro slave in America betrays an appetite for knowledge or any other symptom betokening discontent with his condition or aspiration to freedom, he becomes the object of deadly jealousy, hatred,

fear, and cruelty to his master.* *Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos*, is the domestic policy of many an American slave-owner; as it has been the policy of every tyrant prince and tyrant people by whom a reserve of specious virtue was nourished to appease the rebellions of conscience, and silence the reproaches of mankind. In none of the slaveholding States is it permitted to teach letters either to slaves or to free persons of colour. In all the slaveless States, the education of the free coloured race is discouraged; and in New England which has so long boasted her exemption from negro slavery, so late as the year 1833, Miss Crandall, a pious and benevolent lady, was thrown into prison and prosecuted as a malefactor for having established a school for the education of free mulatto girls. The slaveless States are bound to re-deliver up to bondage all slaves who seek shelter in them from the South; and in the slaveless States, many of the rich inhabitants, as creditors and mortgagees of the Southern planters, are both in legal effect and moral truth proprietors of negro slaves.

* It is the business of the free, *their safety requires it*, to keep the slaves in ignorance. The treatment of the slaves is *in general* as good as circumstances and the *cruel necessity* of the case will permit."—Transactions of the New York Colonization Society, Second Year.

But it is asserted that the generality of the Americans deplore the existence of negro slavery in their country. I believe that many of them indeed deplore it as England's Lincolnshire farmers deplore the existence of their *fen-fever*, which they would willingly banish from among them, *if* in depriving their land of the qualities that engender the endemic malady, they could preserve in it the qualities that contribute to their own pecuniary enrichment. But by a numerous party of the Americans, both in the slave-holding and the slaveless States, is the system of negro slavery neither condemned nor deplored, neither excused nor palliated, but gloried in, applauded, and panegyrized. A Spartan severity or Roman dignity of pride, they maintain, is educated in white men by the habitual consciousness of superiority and predominance over a different race of men whom they at once pity, despise, protect, and ameliorate; and this pagan sentiment is represented as quite capable of the closest alliance with Christian consideration. No surprise was excited in the South, and little if any was awakened in the North, when the Governor of one of the Southern States lately protested in a message to the legislative assembly of his province, that if he were on his death-bed, his latest prayer for his children

would be that they might never inhabit a country in which negro slavery was not established; "Slavery," says Governor Miller of South Carolina to the assembly of this province, in 1829, "*Slavery is not a national evil: on the contrary, it is a national benefit.* Slavery exists in some form every where; and it is not of much consequence, in a philosophical point of view, whether it be voluntary or involuntary." Milton acquiesces, like this magistrate, in the necessary existence of tyranny, but differs widely from his estimate of its merit.

"Tyranny must be;
Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse."

It seems to me impossible to read Governor Miller's words without perceiving that a proprietor of slaves quaffs a draught of power too strong for the head and heart of man. If some wretch were to seduce or compel that gentleman's son to swallow as much rum or brandy as would debase his reason and destroy his constitution, would the father hold his peace on being defensively told that since ardent spirits must and will be abused by mankind, it matters little whether the abuse be voluntary or involuntary on the part of the victims? "I am thoroughly convinced," says a later governor of the same State in a similar official declaration, "that

the institution of domestic slavery, paradoxical as it may seem, is *an indispensable element in an unmixed representative republic.* How *sacred* then is our *obligation* to provide for our *posterity* all the necessary means of defending and preserving an institution so essential to their existence and liberty."*

While America was subject to British domination, no magistrate of an American State ever gave the sanction of magisterial authority to such sentiments as these; and no pulpit was ever profaned with the apologies for slavery which the clergymen of republican America are now not ashamed to preach. Jonathan Edwards, the most admirable teacher of Christian doctrine and pattern of Christian character that America or perhaps the world has produced since the apostolic age, during the ascendancy of Britain, denounced the system of slavery and urged its *immediate* abolition by his countrymen, with a boldness and security of unreproved freedom to which the present race of Americans are utter strangers. And was it then to make America a theatre for such disgraceful display as we have witnessed, that the pious Puritans undertook their pilgrimage to New England—that the peaceful

* These speeches are quoted in Jay's Inquiry.

Quakers retired to Pennsylvania—that Catholics flying from persecution in Britain, set to the world the first example of religious toleration in Maryland —that La Fayette and Kosciusko shed their blood in the cause of American Independence—and that Washington, Franklin, Adams, Jefferson, Jay, and Henry, made for themselves and their country a glorious and immortal name? Every one of these men entertained and expressed a strong abhorrence of negro slavery.* If, by fatal necessity, America *must* copy in her civil policy the vices as well as the virtues of Greece and Rome †—if the lawless abuse

* Washington, writing to his friends Morris and Mercer in 1786, protested that he would never again purchase a slave, and that he ardently desired the abolition of negro slavery. Patrick Henry and Jefferson made the same profession. Franklin attacked the system of negro slavery by an ironical defence of the practice of Christian slavery in Morocco. During the revolutionary war, John Jay declared that "Till America embrace this measure [abolition of slavery] her prayers to Heaven will be impious." Some of the most distinguished champions of the Revolution emancipated their slaves by testamentary bequest—as Judith, the deliverer of Israel, prior to her death, "made her maid free."

† The eminence which the fine arts attained in the classical States of antiquity has been ascribed by many writers to the leisure which freemen there derived from the possession of slaves. If I could subscribe to this theory, I should deem the boasted advantage a "bad eminence," and far too dearly bought: but I believe it utterly unsound and erroneous. In modern times, we have found the leisure of the great and wealthy produce but few and feeble recruits to the ranks of science, literature, or art. Rome with more slaves than Greece, never equalled Greece in the fine arts: and Sparta, which

must always be proportioned to the legitimate enjoyment of freedom—then is America fated to afford the most humiliating illustration ever witnessed by the world, of Milton's melancholy sentiment:—

> "Since the original lapse, *true liberty*
> *Is lost*, which always with right reason dwells
> Twinn'd, and from her hath no dividual being."

True liberty is indeed not more a pleasurable possession than a generous virtue—a principle that enforces restraint of our own, as well as prompts to resistance of other men's usurpation. *They* know the nymph only in one part, and the least noble part of her capacity to bless and dignify mankind, who pursue her merely as the object of selfish gratification, without yielding the homage of reverence to her authority, and obedience to her will—who recognize in her the power of an *impulse*, but not of a *law*,—"the perfect law of liberty." Vainly does he term himself free, who is the slave of his own vicious habit, insolent prejudice, or selfish lust of domination. Liberty, national or individual, is not entitled to respect unless it be founded on justice;

of all the Grecian States most resembled North America in the treatment of slaves, never made any figure in the arts at all. Some of the brightest ornaments of Roman literature were themselves slaves, and the sons of slaves. The glories of Italian art followed the Christian abolition of slavery in Italy. One of the greatest philosophers that Greece ever produced was Epictetus, an emancipated slave.

and if it be, it cannot sanction tyranny wtthout repudiating its own foundation. Merely selfish in its aim, it is such liberty as the prince of darkness claimed against the Lord of light, and more successfully taught fallen man to covet and pursue. The Roman commonwealth was repeatedly brought to the brink of deserved destruction by the conspiracies of slaves; and finally, the number of these domestic enemies contributed in no small degree to the downfall of the Roman empire.

Panegyrics on negro slavery as an ennobling institution, whose proper effect is to elevate the dignity of the whites, and to impart to the blacks as much utility and happiness as is adapted to the capacity of their peculiar nature, are common in the South: and I have heard them uttered in conversation by accomplished Americans who were themselves the citizens of Northern and slaveless States. This party has found various lettered and argumentative champions, of whom the ablest is a man whose genius deserved the championship of a better cause—Professor Tucker of Virginia, whose eloquent, interesting, and in many respects admirable biography of Jefferson, presents the following estimate of the moral value of negro slavery:—"Domestic slavery places the master in a state of moral

discipline; and according to the use he makes of it, is he made a worse or a better man. If he exercise his unrestricted power over the slave in giving ready indulgence to his humours or caprice—if he habitually yields to impulses of anger, and punishes whenever he is disobeyed or obeyed imperfectly, he is certainly the worse for the institution which has thus afforded aliment to his evil propensities. But if, on the other hand, he has been taught to curb these sallies of passion or freaks of caprice, or has subjected himself to a course of salutary restraint, he is continually strengthening himself in the virtues of self-denial, forbearance, and moderation; and he is all the better for the institution which has afforded so much occasion for the exercise of those virtues."

By the same reasoning this enterprising moralist is doubtless prepared to prove that a young prince of unlimited power is all the better for the pimps and parasites who afford him large occasion to manifest his superiority to the seductions of vice and flattery. The conclusion at which he arrives is that the effects of a right, reasonable, temperate use of negro slavery, are to dignify the dispositions of the whites by generous self-command and beneficence, and to embellish and ameliorate the souls of the negroes by

the tender and endearing sentiment of grateful affectionate regard!*

My purpose at present is not to deal with the soundness of this opinion, but to demonstrate its existence among a people whom the American correspondent of Lord Brougham represents as groaning under the continuance of negro slavery as a hated burden forcefully entailed on them by Great Britain, and fixed in the purpose of effecting its removal as an outrage on human nature. I cannot however allude to it even thus cursorily, without denouncing the argument on which it reposes as abominable sophistry, a vilely perverted application of ingenuity, and quite worthy of a moral teacher who, instead of the heaven-taught prayer "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," would substitute "Lead us into temptation, that we may deliver ourselves from evil." Yet the divine Author of the biblical prayer best knew *what is in man.* I regret to see that highly gifted American writer and truly generous and benevolent man Robert Walsh,

* Tucker's Life of Jefferson, vol. i. "No one," say some Americans, "can value liberty so highly as he who beholds in the condition of his own slaves what slavery really is." "We certainly," said Dr. Johnson, "hear the loudest yelps for liberty from the proprietors of negro slaves." Of such a votary of liberty, Thomas Moore has said that "He dreams of freedom in his slave's embrace."

in his published Letter to Lamartine, the French poet and statesman, on negro slavery in the United States, allude even with qualified approbation to Tucker's argument and the relative sentiment in America, and further cite approvingly that execrable Jesuitical axiom propounded in a late Report by a Committee of the French Chamber of Peers, that "there are rights of property as sacred as those of liberty." What sophistical cant! As if any other right of property could be as sacred as that right of property in his own liberty which God and nature give to every man: and as if any other man could possibly acquire an artificial right of property in my forcible privation of my natural right to liberty! Most justly has Bossuet said—"Il n'est point de droit contre le droit."

A natural consequence of the sentiment we have just remarked, is that insolent aversion (chiefly prevalent in the Southern, but more or less apparent in all the States) with which white men in America regard the condition of domestic servants. The just and reasonable effect of the republican system of America should be to make service of every description a liberal relation between man and man. But the spectacle of slave servants and the exaggerated notions of white dignity pervert the sentiments of all white

persons with regard to their condition : freemen shrink from even a seeming assimilation to the character of slaves : and freedom is taxed by the world with producing perverse and inconvenient results which are truly the offspring of its unnatural and unhappy coalition with slavery. Where there are rich and poor, there will be masters and servants—each class wanting what the other has the power to bestow. But this necessary relation is corrupted in America by the subsistence of negro slavery, and by the sentiments which this vile institution engenders.

Every nation has been reproached, more or less justly, with faults peculiar, in kind or degree, to its people. Is there not reason to suppose that all or almost all the faulty peculiarities with which the Americans are taxed, may be imputed to the existence of negro slavery among them ? Can any virtue associate with any vice, without being defiled by its neighbourhood ? Can any member of a body moral, corporate, or politic, be gangrened and corrupted, without the taint being propagated through the whole collective mass ? The strongest and best compacted frame must be generally affected by the continued unsoundness of any one of its organs, or derangement of any one of its functions. The existence and sanction of slavery to any extent

in a commonwealth is a practical revolt against all the restraints of justice and morality.

That there is a party in America by which the practice of negro slavery is sincerely deplored and condemned as a heinous sin in the sight of God, and a cruel outrage on the rights of man—a party by which the fixed purpose of extirpating the evil is really cherished, and the only wise and honest means of accomplishing it are virtuously pursued,—is proved, I gladly admit, by the formation and spread of *The American Anti-Slavery Society.** I heartily wish it were more numerous, and earnestly hope it may become so. But it is not on this society that the American correspondent of Lord Brougham bestows his sympathy and approbation. His championship is all for that far more numerous and powerful body, *The American Colonization Society*, of which he avows himself a zealous member —and of which, after a careful examination of its character and history, I hesitate not to affirm, that it was engendered by a coalition between deluded philanthropy and busy fraud, injustice, and hypocrisy. The most active and influential of its patrons

* In Arthur and Lewis Tappan of New York, and a small but noble band of their coadjutors, this society presents champions of human rights, whose generous and heroic zeal has never been exceeded in any age or country of the world.

have been men who combined with their patronage of the society, the retention of negro slaves, and even a contraband prosecution of the slave-trade. Its professed design is to cure the prejudice entertained by the Americans against men of colour, and to lay a foundation for the total abolition of negro slavery by colonizing a part of Africa (which has been called Liberia) with freed negroes and mulattoes from America: its real object is the security and perpetuation of negro slavery in America, by expelling all coloured free men, and depriving the negro slaves of the spectacle and idea of freedom in any other guise than that of a white skin: and its agency has produced only increased maltreatment of the freed blacks, and more confirmed and rigorous bondage of the enslaved ones. Instead of here adducing (as it would cost but the labour of transcribing to do) the proof I possess of the justice of this charge, I refer for such proof every honest and impartial man who desires it, to an admirable little work published at New York in 1835, and entitled "An Inquiry into the Character and Tendency of the American Colonization and American Anti-Slavery Societies by William Jay"—a work of which the perusal may be accomplished by any reader in a very brief space of time, and which every man who de-

sires the welfare and happiness of the African race ought carefully to consider.

In evidence of the successful prosecution of that fixed purpose of emancipation which Lord Brougham's correspondent imputes to his countrymen, he hails with confident triumph and praise the dawning prospect of abolition of the negro slavery by which Virginia and certain other of the more happily situated (*si sua bona norint*) provinces of the South have been so long disgraced and afflicted. I am not qualified to estimate the solidity of this prospect: I see no cheering quality in its features: and the praise that is bestowed on the relaxing grasp of certain of the slaveholders, seems to me much akin to the merit sometimes affected by exhausted debauchees who profess to forsake their vices when, in reality, their vices forsake them. The commercial interest and position of Virginia, once highly favourable to slave labour, have so completely changed of late years, and her social circumstances in respect to slavery have become so closely assimilated to those of the white population of the Northern provinces, that one of her own statesmen, Mr. Randolph of Roanoke, has repeatedly said in Congress that "the time was coming when the masters would run away from the slaves, and be advertised by them as runaways in

the public papers."* Various attempts have been made by patriotic individuals and societies in America to engage the people and state government of Virginia to abolish an institution clearly proved to have now become there nearly if not wholly profitless to the slave-owners, burdensome to the general resources of the community, hostile to domestic comfort, and perilous to public safety. Of the genius and policy of these exertions, some notion may be derived from the following sentences, which I transcribe from an able and elaborate article in *The American Quarterly Review* for September and December, 1832, in which the whole argument that has been addressed to the Virginians is reproduced with the merit, at least, of singular skill and perspicuity. "We believe that *there is not the slightest moral turpitude* in holding slaves under existing circumstances in the South."—"Our solicitations to the slaveholders, it will be perceived, are founded but little on *the miseries of the blacks*. We direct ourselves almost exclusively to the injuries that slavery inflicts on the whites."—"The whole scope of this article will be to show the necessity of her [Virginia] promptly doing something to check the palpable mischiefs her pros-

* American Quarterly Review for September and December, 1832.

perity is suffering from slavery. We design to shew that all her sources of *economical* prosperity are poisoned by slavery; and we shall hint at its *moral* evils only as they occasion or imply destruction to the *real* prosperity of a nation." Shades of Washington and La Fayette! behold the worship that is offered in the temple erected by your valour and virtue!—"Unless we first make this position impregnable, *we shall ask no one to sacrifice merely to abstract humanity and justice.* Nor shall we insist on Virginia's beginning action on this momentous subject, until we have shown that her genuine ultimate interest will be promoted by it. The best way of persuading men of this world to deeds which involve the sacrifice of present interests, is to convince them that a greater prospective interest may be thereby secured."—This is sheer error and absurdity. A depraved taste is corrected by changing its nature, not by altering its direction: the calculations of avarice and cruelty are perverse and short-sighted: and it is too much to expect that he who is such a fool as to be a knave, should be uniformly prudent and clear-sighted in his knavery. If we would alter the conduct and habits of that man who believes that it can profit him to make worldly gain at the

expense of his soul, we must seek to rectify his views of *profit*, instead of attempting the impossibility of beguiling him into the service of God by blending it in his estimate and purpose with the service of mammon. No pecuniary motive or compensation was tendered to the young man in Scripture for the surrender he was required to make of those possessions which he could not continue to retain without violation of his duty to God. But in the Essay which we are considering, all other human *interests* are regarded but as the small dust in the balance, compared with the interests which a man can reckon on his ten fingers; all other fears are tenderly considered, except the fear of God; all other cautions enforced and applauded, except caution to ascertain and obey His will; the Colonization Society is extolled with glowing encomium; and the strongest prejudices against men of African descent are avowed and defended. The author is manifestly either incapable of comprehending, or convinced of the incapacity of his American audience to appreciate the maxim of Charles Fox, that that which is morally wrong, can never be politically right. But let us return to himself; and let him clothe his own sentiments in his own language.—"Hence, even if we should succeed in

making out our case as to Virginia, it will be instantly remarked that we have said very little that will touch South Carolina and Georgia, and scarcely anything applicable to Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. If the prosperity of any of these is founded in circumstances of soil, climate, products, &c., of such nature and degree as that *it will not sink* under the precarious specific (neck or nothing) of slave labour, *à la bonne heure*, let them go on. This is undoubtedly the case more or less of the sugar, cotton, and rice plantation States. But it is not the case of Virginia."

But, like some of the vice-bred maladies of the human frame, from which it is hardly possible for the victims to obtain deliverance, negro slavery exerts an influence so blinding and corruptive, that all these attempts have hitherto proved ineffectual; and the Virginian slaveholders, in default of the profitable employment of negro labour at home, have betaken themselves to the infamous brothel-like occupation of *slave-breeding* (what a destination of American ground!) for the supply of the more Southern quarters of their national confederacy.*

* Several others of the (now) thirteen slave-holding States have followed the example of Virginia in addicting themselves to slave-breeding—whence the increasing extent and horrors of the domestic slave-trade of North America.

They are as reluctant to set free their negroes as were Pharaoh and his people to suffer the departure of the enslaved Israelites, even when the retention of these bondmen was proved to be the ruin of the land of Egypt. And even if hereafter the exertions to which I have alluded should succeed—is it on such policy as they disclose that the divine blessing can be honestly implored or reasonably expected? Is it a happy and respectable social edifice that is likely to be reared by builders who lay their foundation in avowed disregard of God's will and law? Or, what other result is to be rationally anticipated, than the reproduction and extension of that state of society (exemplified in the now slaveless provinces) which furnishes a theme of outward boast to the Americans, but extorts, as we have seen, their admission to each other that the happiness of the blacks and the general welfare of the commonwealth are more effectually promoted by the undisguised bondage of coloured men than by any permissible result of American emancipation?

Whatever be the true moral character of negro slavery in North America,—with regard either to its first introduction, or its continued and actual subsistence,—it belongs to the Americans themselves. They, and they only, are entitled to the blushing

honour, or liable to the blush-impressing blame. In common with many European friends (not flatterers) of the Americans, I have long been persuaded that, whether the horrid practice which exists among them be remediable or not, it will never be cured whilst a fallacious soul-soothing theory of its origin is current among the American people, or propounded with hopeful defence by them in answer to the moral reproach of the world. The radical cure of deeply fixed malady will never be found by the sick man whom passion prompts and sophistry enables to misrepresent the source and underrate the malignity of his disease. They that be whole or deem themselves whole, seek not to the physician, though perchance they may seek to such fallacious quackery and dupery as that of the Colonization Society.

The main cause, it seems to me, or at least one of the main causes of the present subsistence of negro slavery and maltreatment of coloured persons in America, is the violent prejudice that divides the two races of men in that country—itself in a great measure the effect of negro slavery. I have already cited an American avowal most distinct and most impious, of the force of this prejudice. Unhappily, it is easier to multiply than to select citations of a

similar import. "Prejudices," says the American correspondent of Lord Brougham, "numerous and long cherished, must be overcome. Those who have never owned slaves, and who have not grown up in the midst of them, can have *no correct idea* of either the nature or the strength of these prejudices. That those who have held slaves and governed them all their lives, and who have been influenced by prejudices which have descended from generation to generation, should at once become reconciled to the idea of not only setting their slaves free, and thus losing what they consider their property, but also of seeing those same slaves become entitled to every privilege of freedom which they themselves enjoy, however desirable, is yet the most improbable of all moral or political changes."* I believe this writer completely mistaken in supposing Europeans less capable than Americans of comprehending the prejudices of slaveholders. We know how difficult it is to redeem any part of the violated liberties of mankind from the usurping hands of royal despots; and can easily conceive the force of pride and prejudice with which citizen slave-holders must cling to a system that elevates them to the rank of rulers of a con-

* "Letter," &c. p. 27.

siderable portion of the human race, and the overthrow of which would strip them of their importance, and level them with the men whom they now govern with an authority more absolute than belongs to any sovereign in Europe. It is, indeed, a horrid consideration that in America the vilest of mankind, even the wretch whom his crimes have made a fugitive from European society, may for a small sum of money acquire such power over his sable brethren as the Americans would die rather than entrust to the wisest and best of men over themselves. We are as well aware as the Americans of the strength of *the slaveholder prejudice*, and have a far more *correct idea* of its nature. But, not having been exposed to its infection, nor trained to partake it, (the very cause of the superior correctness of our idea) we regard it with a far less indulgent eye. Strangers behold with shrinking horror the *goitres* that are compassionately or negligently considered by the natives of those regions where that afflictive blemish prevails.

Of every country in the world, I believe, the patriotic vindicators and apologists are apt to say to its foreign censors, You cannot judge our national character and institutions, without having lived amongst us. Now, this consideration, though doubtless partially

just, is generally pressed far beyond the limits of its legitimate application. When I am told that I cannot rightly estimate slavery, without having lived in a society where slavery is established, and actually breathed its pestilential atmosphere,—it seems to me that I might as reasonably be told that I cannot rightly estimate debauchery and libertinism, without first becoming the fellow and familiar associate of libertines and debauchees. Is a sot or gambler the only proper arbitrator of the merits of gamblers and sots? Must the philanthropists of Europe distrust their judgments and feelings, because they have not been exposed to an influence of which the continued operation has transformed Henry Clay of Kentucky from the generous emancipator which he showed himself in his youth, to the champion of slavery which he has become in his old age?

But this leads me to remark that, in one particular, some of the European advocates of the abolition of slavery in America do (according at least to my thoughts) very greatly err. To the prejudices and antipathies subsisting between the whites and the blacks, they refer with a frequency doubtless becoming the importance of such a consideration. But they regard it too exclusively as a matter of condemnation, and too little as a naked fact or cir-

cumstance that must *if possible*, or *as far as possible*, be remedially dealt with. They rub the sore, when they should, if they can, produce the plaster; and show too little indulgence for the force of temptations which their own lot has happily exempted them from experiencing. Much of their language tends to irritate slave-holders, and so far to fortify (by thickening the mist of passion) the obstructive fact and circumstance that confronts their own view and desire. They "speak the truth;" but not "in love." We may condemn vice, while we regard its victims with more of regret than condemnation. That a woman has been bred among women lost to virtue and honour, and that her first recollections of human kindness are blended with the impression of their manners, may be the explanation, perhaps the apology of her personal profligacy, though it will not render her society the less unacceptable, or her conduct the less illaudable. Such a woman is at once more justly treated, and more likely to be amended by the mild address of a humble Christian than by the scornful rebuke of a haughty and self-righteous Pharisee. Let us, as an inspired teacher recommends, "consider ourselves, lest we also be tempted." Horace tells us that all the splendour of his genius, aided by the

favour of Augustus, the patronage of Mæcenas, and the friendship of Virgil, could not defend him from general contempt at Rome as the son of a *freedman!** And yet Horace was a man of the same bodily colour as the persons who regarded him with disdain, and whose insignificant existence has been rescued from oblivion only by the immortal verse of the man whom they presumed to despise. I suspect that many an European condemner of American prejudice,—many a man of pure moral habit and sincere (though of course imperfect) religious conviction, would be less shocked to hear that his son had corrupted the virtue of a negro or mulatto woman, than that he had made her his wife. Every man discerns the mote in his brother's eye, and condemns the degree in which another's prejudice transcends his own.

Yet, be it always remembered that between different degrees and different operations of the same prejudice, there may be a wide moral distinction. Degree is an important element in moral consideration, and often constitutes the whole difference between innocence and criminality. Scripture con-

* Freedmen at Rome were compelled to wear a distinctive dress, and were not admitted to the entire privileges of citizenship. They were generally regarded at Rome much as free persons of colour are regarded in America.

demns alike inordinate affection and destitution of affections. If I am willing to admit men of every bodily complexion to an equal share with me in civil rights and political franchises; and, in my personal intercourse with them, to fulfil all the duties of courtesy and humanity—if I am willing to plead my cause before a coloured judge, to obey a civil or military officer of sable hue, to attend the ministry of a preacher in whom I recognize no colour save the colour of his sentiments and opinions, and to receive the sacrament from negro hands,—I am not to be classed with the votaries of American prejudice, because (neither judging nor restraining the liberty of others) I may personally shrink from conjugal ties with an African complexion, and might regret to see any of my children contract them. Even this man's modified prejudice (little if at all stronger than the repulsion that separates him from a white woman coarsened by exposure to weather, toil, ignorance, depression, and vulgarity) may be traced, more or less directly, to the existence of negro slavery, and the light in which it causes coloured people to appear. Slavery at once corrupts the nature and discredits in universal estimation the peculiar colour of its victims; and the prejudice against the colour reacts on the injustice which produced it, and is pas-

sionately cherished as an apology by those to whom the continuance of the injustice is convenient. In the course of half a century's experience and survey of human life in various countries of the world, I have felt and seen the utmost force of prejudice on the human mind. But I have also seen and felt that prejudice frequently owes its prolonged sway to an erroneous opinion that it is insurmountable. "Find, if you can," says a great moral bard, "in *what* you cannot change." And when Americans tell me that they *cannot* change their prejudices with respect to coloured men,—then, in the language of the same poet, I presume to tell them that

> "I, who think more highly of our kind,
> (And surely Heaven and I are of a mind),"

deem them completely mistaken, and blindly unjust to the noblest capacity of their nature. Our Creator, who has commanded us to "honour *all* men," never gave a command without imparting sufficient ability to perform it. I have no doubt (Heaven correct my conviction if wrong, or commend it to others if right) that universal emancipation of the coloured race, with free communication of the happiness of refined intelligence to them, would be attended with many instances of intermar-

riage of the two races—whence, from the ascertained predominance of the nobler colour and feature, would arise a complexion with which even the most fastidious delicacy of the most prejudiced white men would not disdain to commingle. But at present, such commixture, in legitimate guise, is not only rejected, but disallowed by the ruling sentiment in America. Its potential efficiency, however, has been forcibly illustrated in many parts of America, and especially at New Orleans, by the progressive results of that licentious intercourse from which the two races have never been debarred.

It is a remarkable circumstance, and well worthy of more extended consideration than at present I have leisure to bestow on it, that the Turks and Moors, though long wedded to the system of slavery, were never tainted (or very slightly tainted) by *prejudice of colour*. Why were they exempt from this prejudice? Because the legitimate designation of a slave with them was not distinction of colour but distinction of faith—their faith expressly permitting them to make slaves of all who do not embrace it. And when negro slavery was yet in its infancy,—ere yet its corruptive influence was fully effused on mankind,—the practice seems to have derived little or no support from the sentiments of white men

with respect to colour. Bertrandon de la Broequiere, one of the ministers of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, in the very interesting Journal he has left of his Travels in Palestine in the years 1432 and 1433, relates with *equal* horror that he saw white Christians exposed to sale at Bursa, and a black girl similarly treated at Damascus. What shall we say when Mahometans, unguided save by the light of nature, relax the tyrant grasp which men calling themselves Christians are fain to continue? What but *corruptio bonorum pessima*,—or, with citation of higher wisdom, " Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory."

The American prejudice, engendered by the depraving influence of slavery both on masters and slaves, and fomented by the distinctive colour of the Africans, has been carried so far as to have suggested the apologetic theory current among some philosophical slave-owners, that the negroes are an unalterably distinct, inferior, and semi-brutal race of beings — a notion by which the degradation that human beings inflict on their fellows in reducing them to the level of the brute creation is charged upon God, whose word assures us that he created man after his own image, and

formed of one blood all the families on earth. Alas! man seems to be the only creature capable of provoking from his fellow man such cruelty as the blacks have experienced from the whites. But interest and pride harden the heart; a deceived heart perverts the understanding; and men are easily persuaded to consider those as brutes whom they deem it convenient to treat as such.* Strange and horrid, that such sentiments should be entertained or professed by the parents of a mulatto race! The best philosophical refutation of their impious theory that I have ever seen, is the production of an American writer, and occurs in Dr. S. Smith's interesting "Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Figure and Complexion in the Human Species." † Anthony Benezet, the Quaker, himself a very ingenious and accomplished man, living in Pennsylvania at the

* "Ye be but *brutes*, and no more fit to advise me than a blind man is fit to discourse of colours," was the answer of Henry VIII. to a remonstrance from a numerous body of the peasantry of England.—Lord Herbert of Cherbury. Pym, in impeaching Lord Strafford for his misgovernment of Ireland, protested that he had treated the Irish as *brutes;* and indignantly asked, "If it be treason against man to embase the current coin of a country, is it not treason against God to corrupt and vilify that nobler coinage on which He has impressed His own divine image and superscription?"

† See also on the same subject, Clarkson's "Researches, Antediluvian, Patriarchal," &c.

time when it was a slaveholding State, and who had conversed extensively with negroes both enslaved and free, and personally undertaken the education of a great number of them, pronounced, as the result of his experience, that this race is perfectly equal to the whites in all the endowments of nature. The prevalence of an opposite opinion, he ascribed partly to the debasing effect of slavery on the minds of the negroes, and partly to the influence of ignorance, pride, and cruelty on those white men who, pluming themselves on a wide separation from their coloured fellows, are incompetent to form a sound judgment on the capacities of this race.* Dr. Fouré of Nantes, one of the greatest physicians and most learned and intelligent men in France,—a man whose vigorous, penetrative, and comprehensive genius has been enlightened by the widest experience and is warmed and elevated by the most generous and benevolent heart,—who resided and practised long at Haiti both prior and posterior to its revolutionary change,—who endured severe persecution and incurred still greater danger from the prejudice of the blacks against the whites, and hardly saved his life by consenting to act for a while as physician to the negro army of General Rigaud,—declares to

* Vaux's Life of Benezet.

me, as the result of his experience, that he could never discern any natural distinction between white and coloured men,* — nor any moral difference between the races that was not clearly referable to the depraving operation of slavery. Some white men cannot pardon the blacks whom they have injured; but Dr. Fouré can forgive the blacks who injured him, and regard the exasperation from which he suffered with the liberal indulgence of exalted wisdom. The experience of every age has confirmed Homer's maxim that *the day which makes man a slave takes half his worth away.* Impudently seeking a defence of their cruelty even in the most detestable of its fruits, slave owners appeal to the degradation inflicted by slavery on the negro race as a proof that the race is naturally degraded to an aptitude for slavery. That the mental debasement of the negro race is produced not by

* Human nature appears least respectable to its own least respectable members. The wise and good are ever prompt to recognize, and liberal in appreciating the worth and capacity of other men. The Malay and Hottentot slaves at the Cape of Good Hope used to be regarded by their masters very much as negroes are regarded in America. But the greatest genius that ever visited the Cape of Good Hope, Sir John Herschel, assures me that there appeared to him to exist no substantial distinction, moral or intellectual, between those men and the natives of Europe.

the qualities of their physical constitution, but by the moral operation of their misfortunes and maltreatment, is strongly inferred by the similarly debased estate of those numerous families and classes of men in Hindostan whom the tyrannical and brutifying system of *castes* has depressed beneath the civil and political level of their countrymen. The natural superiority which a white slaveholder arrogates to himself over a negro is not greater than the superiority affected by a Hindu of high caste over one whose caste is reckoned servile and plebeian.

How is the fatal and inhuman prejudice, fraught with so much wickedness and woe, to be successfully combated and finally subdued in America? A great step would be made towards this desirable end, by universal emancipation. For, while the great majority or even any considerable portion of the blacks remain in slavery, the freed portion continue allied by colour to a degraded race, and must partake the contempt inspired by proscribed and felon hue. While a black skin is reckoned the hue of slavery, every approach to it will be as much repudiated and despised, even by persons of mixed breed, as humble though honest employments are scouted by wealthy upstarts in white

society. Even while the prejudice remains, let it not sanction the continuance of cruelty and injustice.

But it is the influence of religion, from which this grand consummation is to be expected. And though an American writer whom I have already quoted denies that even religion itself is capable of exerting an influence so mighty, I confidently ascribe to religion the power which he refuses it, and receive no other conviction from his words than that he knows not what true and undefiled religion is. He looks at this celestial principle in the foul and feeble copy of the world's depraved practice. I look at its original picture in the word of God,—from which, I am firmly persuaded that more of the light and truth and force of the Gospel has yet to break forth on mankind than, except in brief and partial flashes, the world has ever yet seen. Scripture has promised that the time will come when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"—when none shall hurt or oppress within the extent of Divine dominion, but all hearts and knees shall bow to Him before whose presence every valley shall be filled and every mountain brought low, and "in whom is neither Jew nor Gentile, Greek nor Barbarian, *Bond nor Free:*" And

I believe God rather than man. "Revelation," says the excellent Bishop Trevor, "may be slow in working the full purpose of Heaven, but it *must* be sure. Religion must one day be a very different thing from what we at present behold it. Christian charity cannot always be to the world a light without heat, a pale cold fire. Its warmth at length must be universally felt." *His* arm is not shortened, who in days of old gave bondmen favour in the eyes of those who had dragged them from their homes and detained them in captivity—who caused their oppressor himself to break their chains and rebuild their city.* The increased effusion of religious light and influence will lead men to find in every instance of human weakness, misfortune, and inferiority, not invitations to tyranny and usurpation, but motives to compassion and opportunities of beneficence; and teach their hearts to feel the force, as well as their eyes to see the meaning of our Saviour's answer to the lawyer's question, "And *who* is my neighbour?" No person who has studied Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade, and walked in spirit by that man's side

* "He [Cyrus] shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts."—Isaiah xlv. 13.

up the steep hill that he gloriously climbed, will despair of the final triumph of pious energy and single hearted benevolence over the most obstinate resistance that prejudice, interest, and habit can oppose to human welfare and improvement. "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." From every temptation that assails human nature, the Almighty has provided *a way to escape:* and when the will exists, the way will be found. It is the fearful, the unbelieving, the slothful, who says, "There is a lion in the way;" and shuts his heart against the light and warmth of Christianity, lest its flame should burn his fingers. The faithful believer finds the yoke of virtue made easy, and its burden light.

The descendants of the New England Puritans, of the Maryland Catholics*, and of the New Jersey and Pennsylvanian Quakers, must carry out to its

* The Church of Rome, to which these Catholics ascribe infallible wisdom, has not only anathematized negro slavery as an outrage to religion and nature, but repeatedly conferred the rank of priesthood on negroes, and even canonized some of the negro priests as saints. See Gregoires "*Traité de la Noblesse de la Peau.*" The greatest champion of African rights that has ever appeared in Maryland was Elisha Tyson a Quaker. Of the heroic labours, the superhuman courage and fortitude with which this Christian Hercules stemmed the flood of iniquity at its fiercest height, a striking picture is preserved in the appendix to Mr. Sturge's "Visit to the United States."

full extent the principle that conducted their fathers to America. It was the boast of those fathers that the Almighty, in giving them the heritage of the new world, had distinguished them by a specialty of divine favour akin to that by which the land of promise was granted to the people of Israel: and it is the opprobrium of their descendants, as it was of the degenerated children of Israel, that "He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry." The race of white men must acquire and exercise the truly Christian virtue of Forgiveness—not that spurious copy of the virtue, better deserving to be termed a proud self-glorious disdain of other men's real or imagined trespasses against us, but a hearty repentance of our trespasses against them, with humble forgiveness of the moral superiority over ourselves to which our injustice has elevated them, and of the abhorrence of ourselves with which it has inspired them. We have seen that Jefferson, in alluding to the separative influence of the American prejudice between the two races of people, deduces his melancholy conclusion of the hopelessness of its cure, as much from the juster resentment of the blacks as from the less just but equally natural and far stronger fear and fear-bred hatred of the whites. I am convinced that he

is mistaken. *Proprium est humani generis*, says Tacitus, *odisse quem laeserit:* And, with fuller expression of the same sentiment, a tuneful moralist of Britain has said that

> "Forgiveness to the injured does belong:
> *They* never pardon who commit the wrong:"

certainly, they neither do nor can, till (seeking and finding) they are endowed with the strength of divine sentiment from on high—till the full knowledge that they are themselves at once indefensibly guilty and divinely forgiven, generates the full virtue of forgiveness in their minds. If the whites will forgive the blacks for having been socially degraded and for having resented their degradation, the blacks will undoubtedly forgive the whites for having been their degraders. Emancipation of slaves is an act of beneficence: but, like other beneficent acts, it is one which is too often erroneously estimated, and marred in the performance. Human benefactors of their fellows delight to account their benefactions, and to have them regarded by the world as noble gratuitous effusions of superior worth and liberality, rather than as humble and truly generous recognitions of duty and equality. "Let the brother of low degree," says the precept of inspired wisdom, "rejoice in that he is exalted: but the rich in that

he is made low"—that he has descended from the false elevation of a brief, unjust, and delusive superiority.

No man can feel a warmer or more friendly interest than I do in North America, where already great things have been done for human welfare and dignity, and where the mighty problem of Republicanism is in process of solution for the benefit and glory or the detriment and humiliation of the whole human race. But my regard cannot separate her virtue from her happiness and renown: and highly as I prize her favour, I would (if the choice must be made) far rather deserve than obtain it. Her solid and lasting fame is ill consulted by those flattering friends who deny or palliate the faults which sully its lustre and impair or pervert its just impression on mankind. Were the dark and horrible blot of negro slavery obliterated from the surface of her great commonwealth, the brightness of its social aspect would awaken universal admiration, and shed a cheering and ameliorating ray through the whole expanse of human nature and society. The rise and early progress of every one of her primitive States is a noble monument of fortitude and virtue. Her war of Independence casts the historic glories of Greece, of Rome, of Switzerland, and of Holland into the shade. The

scene disclosed by the Philadelphia Convention that assembled in 1788 for the establishment of the American Constitution,—maugre the acts and omissions respecting slavery and the slave-trade,—this scene, I say, in its main transactions and their general issue, does in dignity, wisdom, and worth, transcend the highest conception suggested by the political annals of any other people in ancient or in modern times. A clear, just, and lively portraiture of it, I think, might be sufficient (beneficially) to revolutionize the world,—to awaken throughout the whole range of humanity a force of sentiment and opinion incompatible with the subsistence of unjust and tyrannical authority. *But*, while the national flag that was unfurled with such happy promise, floats in expanded pride and glory along the stream of time,—a black cloud, like the monitory slave in the car of the victorious Roman, o'ercasts while it pursues the triumph, and taints while it partakes the gale.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE foregoing sheets were ready for the press, when four remarkable Works reached my hands—1st, a Pamphlet recently published at Paris entitled "Essai sur les moyens d'extirper les prejugés des Blancs contre la couleur des Africains et des sang-melés," by Mr. Linstant, an accomplished *negro* inhabitant of Haiti, to which a prize has been awarded by a French philanthropic society, — a circumstance which, if it had been prophesied to the French people sixty years ago, they would have scouted as a baseless and extravagant vision.—2d, A Pamphlet published at London in 1840, bearing the strange and melancholy title of "The American Churches, the Bulwarks of American Slavery," and though anonymous, yet sufficiently known to be the production of James Gillespie Birney, a zealous American Abolitionist who once possessed negro slaves, but emancipated them all,—like Zaccheus, who no sooner beheld the Redeemer

of the human race than he joyfully restored every particle of his property which he could not retain without wrongful encroachment on the rights of his fellow men. 3d, The recently published volume entitled "A Visit to the United States in 1841" by Joseph Sturge;—and 4th, a pamphlet intended for Trans-Atlantic circulation, printed (not published) at London in 1841, entitled "A Letter to the Clergy of various Denominations, and to the Slave-holding Planters in the Southern parts of the United States of America," by the truly venerable and venerated Thomas Clarkson.

Of Mr. Linstant's Essay, the historical portion is more valuable and interesting than the doctrinal or preceptive. He is far more successful in painting and discreditably tracing the evil prejudice of which he complains, than in indicating its cure. With great force and clearness, he has demonstrated that the prejudice of colour is not a primitive but a derivative prejudice, which has its source not in nature, but in the accidental association of slavery with negro hue. He gives an interesting list of negroes and men of negro descent who have gained the highest eminence in the arts of war and of peace: But, in citing Toussaint L'Ouverture, he should have related (as surely he knows)

that the French General Laveaux termed him "the Negro Spartacus foretold by Raynal," and that the Spanish Marquis D'Hermona declared, in the fervour of his admiration, that "if the Supreme Being were to descend upon earth, the habitation he would choose would be the breast of Toussaint." Mr. Linstant advocates *gradual* abolition of slavery, through the preparatory process of moral and religious education to be administered by masters or the ecclesiastical delegates of masters to slaves! But let those (and there are many) who embrace this specious and delusive view, reflect seriously on the great disadvantage with which Christianity is preached by white men to the negro slaves of other whites. The preachers are visibly allied by colour, by social position, and by profession of faith with the tyrant slave masters. Delivered from *their* lips, the precepts of the Gospel are the words of the oppressor to the slave. The preachers seem to be seeking to rivet chains, to silence well-founded complaint, and to be offering visionary consolation for substantial wrong. The course in which the Gospel has spread and Christian teaching been divinely blessed, has not been from superiors to inferiors, from masters to slaves, from the allies and confederates to the victims of human power: the

course appointed to its progress is from the little to the great, and not from the great to the little,—lest the power should appear to be of men. Our Saviour himself became poor like the poorest of us, that he might enlighten our minds and elevate our condition and prospects; and His charge to all who would undertake his service was that they must divest themselves of the influence of human authority, if they would arm themselves with the power that is from on high; and that they who would be greatest must become least of all. "Your servants for Christ's sake," is the description which the preachers of the Gospel must assume and realize towards the persons to whom they are sent. One of the first lessons that Christian doctrine teaches to a slave, is the iniquity of his bondage. The Bible indeed, while it expressly sanctions his wish and his peaceable endeavour to be free, directs him to submit with resignation to his lot while only strife and violence can alter it—just as it directs all Christians to endure without retorting blows, and to suffer wrong and injustice rather than go to law before unchristian tribunals. But a literal or even a substantial conformity with these precepts implies a degree of Christian attainment of which the history of man affords very few examples: and the

instance of Onesimus who fled from his master, is more likely to be repeated, than the influence of St. Paul in persuading the slave to return, and the master to receive him not as a culpable deserter but *as a brother beloved.* If we would effectually preach Christianity to enslaved negroes, we must begin by showing them the effects of Christianity on ourselves in constraining us to break their bonds. But it is needless to expatiate on this point—particularly in noticing the Essay of Mr. Linstant, who has himself contrived in the historical part of his performance, completely (though I suppose unconsciously) to refute his own erroneous doctrine.

Even in the historical part of Mr. Linstant's Essay, there are some errors—one of which, more especially, I regret, because I think it highly desirable that the peculiar merits, positive and comparative, of the slavery systems that existed in the colonial possessions of the different States of Europe, and indeed in all the various States of the world, should be accurately known. When slavery is no more, and when its history comes to be dispassionately written, a correct picture of the moral form and pressure it assumed in different countries, will afford a curious insight into the shades and varieties of national character. Now, it appears to me that Mr. Linstant

has viewed with most erring indulgence and superficial appreciation, the conduct of the Spaniards as slave masters. The history of slavery will be a black page in the annals of every people that has possessed slaves: and Spain will see no darker page than her own, except perhaps in the annals of Holland and North America. Licentious in their own conduct and example, and yet bigoted and superstitious, the Spanish colonists sought to gratify their priests and bribe the rage of Heaven by what they called the religious and moral instruction of their slaves—the religious part consisting in cramming the memories of the negroes with Latin orisons which they did not understand; and the moral part consisting in attempts to tyrannize over the coarsest and strongest appetites of their nature by the restraints, at once irritating and ineffectual, of bolts and bars. They indulged their own pride and deceived the eyes of strangers by the pompous attire which in public decked the attendant slaves, who on their return to domestic privacy were stripped as naked as worms; and, when (with more or less cause) offended, they treated these slaves with the unbridled fury common to provoked despots, and the stern unsparing cruelty that has always formed a prominent trait of Spanish character.

The pamphlet of Mr. Birney, I regret to find fully justifies its title; and afflictingly demonstrates that the American clergy, very generally throughout the whole commonwealth, but especially in the Southern States, have, with increasing proclivity to evil, become of late years the pillars and champions of negro slavery.* Half corrupted by evil example, half terrified by insolent menace, they seem to stand between the consciences and the delusions of their flocks, like the priests of St. Januarius between the fears of the Neapolitan populace and the anxious desire of the same populace to be soothed by the pretended liquefaction of their favourite Saint's blood. When Mount Vesuvius is in combustion, the populace are ready to tear their priests in pieces if the Saint's blood is said to delay or refuse to liquefy; but pass from rage and fear to security and triumph whenever the priests proclaim that the miraculous liquefaction has taken place. Many shocking passages

* Dr. Channing's admirable pamphlet "The Duty of the Free States," &c. most honourably distinguishes him from those American clergymen who comply with the popular cry "Prophesy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits." He rebukes his countrymen's declension from the principles on which repose the virtue, happiness, and renown of America, with the concern of a patriot, the dignity of a sage, and the fire of a prophet.

are cited by Mr. Birney from the published discourses of American clergymen. One of these new proclaimers of "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth *Bondage* to men,"—one of these preachers of the doctrine that "the labourer is not worthy of his hire,"—says of slavery, "It is *not* a moral evil. *It is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes:* And had it not been done for the best, God alone, who is able, long since would have overruled it. *It is by Divine appointment.*" Another *reverend* champion of oppression says "The right to hold a slave is founded on this rule, 'Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.'"!!! Such interpreters of divine precept might have afforded a transient solace to the young man who departed *sad* from the presence of Christ because he was directed to surrender his possessions if he would fulfil the will of God. The execrable effusions of their madness or hypocrisy remind me of a work which, whatever reputation it may have enjoyed in its day, is now forgotten by all the world except by a few scholars who remember it only with amazement and contempt:—I allude to the History of the Inquisition

by a Spanish ecclesiastic, Luiz de Paramo Archdeacon of Leon, first printed at Madrid in 1598, and subsequently at Antwerp in 1614. It is there with great learning, gravity, and sincerity, maintained that God introduced the Inquisition into the world, and was Himself the first Inquisitor; that he furnished a precedent for the usual process of the Inquisition, by judging Adam and Eve *without the presence of spectators, or the assistance of witnesses!* and that he sanctioned the usual judgments of the Inquisition, *directly*, by confiscating Adam's property in Paradise and assigning a peculiar dress to the culprits, and *indirectly*, by suggesting to the disciples of our Saviour the invocation of fire from heaven on the Samaritan village where hospitable entertainment was denied them!!! &c. &c. &c.* It would be neither pleasant nor profitable to follow the Spaniard any farther through the dark phrenzied evolutions of his blasphemous nonsense. And it would be equally superfluous for me to pursue his American rivals with comments on a system of doctrine (a hell-bred edition of Chris-

* See an account of Paramo (written I believe by Dr. Southey) in Aikin's General Biography, vol. vii. A copy of his History of the Inquisition exists in Dr. Williams' Library in Red Cross Street, London.

tianity) which has already undergone the commentary of Theodore Weld,* Joseph Sturge, and Thomas Clarkson. I place the votaries of that system in the category of those of whom Scripture pronounces, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" They are certainly not the true followers of Him who declared His office to be "to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." From such deceitful pastors who cry "peace" to the disturbed conscience "when there is no peace," will God of a surety require the blood of all whom they have hardened in guilt and delusion.

The two other works to which I have alluded, need no extraneous assistance to recommend them and their authors to the respect and admiration of mankind. Mr. Sturge has given an excellent and interesting picture of the present state of American sentiment and practice with regard to enslaved and coloured men. That the *slave-owners* themselves are not free from a confused perception of the iniquity of slavery, he deduces, I think, very justly

* See an extract from Mr. Weld's writings in the work of Mr. Sturge.

from the absurd contempt with which they regard the *slave-traders* with whom they deal. Among other instances of blasphemous practice worthy of the speculative blasphemy which I have already cited, he relates that a congregation of Catholics in Maryland recently sold some of their own church members who were slaves, *and applied the proceeds of the sale to the erection of a place of worship!*— thus, with daring impiety, giving the lie direct to God's own word, and setting Him forth as a Being who delights in *sacrifice* rather than in *mercy*, and whom a man may propitiate by offering at the altar a gift which he has procured by wronging his brother.

To such false worshippers may well be addressed the question of the prophet:—"Is it such a fast that I have chosen? Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye *break every yoke?*" Still more applicable to them is the prophetic imprecation:— "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work!" Will the malediction be eluded, will it not rather be aggravated by the

plea that the house so unrighteously erected was to be called a house of prayer?

Alluding to the American prejudice against colour, Mr. Sturge declares (in conformity with the opinion of the wise and good ex-President of the United States John Quincy Adams) that "Philadelphia seems to be the metropolis of this odious prejudice; and there is probably no city in the known world, where dislike, amounting to hatred, of the coloured population prevails more than in the city of brotherly love." One of the most pleasing features of Mr. Sturge's Work, is the noble value he entertains of exertions in the cause of humanity, that remind every body but himself of what his own exertions have been. Mr. Clarkson (now in the eighty-third year of his illustrious life) has with earnest vehemence, tempered and adorned by "meekness of wisdom" remonstrated with the Southern planters of America, and especially with their clergy, on the blasphemy of their pretended grafture of negro slavery on the stock of Christianity. May God open the hearts of those to whom His good and faithful servant has spoken! I heartily wish that I had wealth and other power enough to place these two works in the hands of every honest man in Europe and America.

If La Fayette travelled in bodily presence to assist the national emancipation of America, La Fayette's dearest and most revered friend Clarkson has now travelled in spirit to emancipate the Americans from a bondage of soul far more vile and odious than any yoke that other nations can ever impose upon them. In generous desire and sorrow, —but not the sorrow of those who "sorrow without hope,"—are his age-dimmed and venerable eyes turned to that noble and interesting though slavery-stained land. If they must (as soon they must) close, without witnessing there the recognition of *Universal Emancipation*, we may at least hope that the mantle of Thomas Clarkson will descend on the shoulders of Joseph Sturge.

The land that produced John Howard must rejoice to see his travels of mercy emulated and his peculiar glory extended and partaken by such associates as Sturge and his friend and fellow Quaker John Joseph Gurney. In addition to the other services rendered by these men to the cause of human improvement, they strengthen this cause by making its friends in different countries known to each other—warming their hearts by the contemplation, and uniting them by the sympathy of virtue. Many an American name have they rendered dear

to the friends and valuable to the interests of virtue in England.

Beyond a doubt, the day is coming when slavery will be known to our posterity merely as a mortifying historical fact; and be regarded by them just as we regard the crusades, the *auto-da-fés*, and the witch-burnings of our prejudiced and deluded forefathers. Happy they whose exertions shall have contributed to so great a reformation of human nature!

THE END.

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